



The international weekly heralding the coming of Moshiach

BEIS MOSHIACH



THE CROWN OF SHVAT

D'VAR MALCHUS

MY MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

CHASSIDIM DESCRIBING THEIR
UNIQUE RELATIONSHIPS WITH
THE REBBE

WHY IS THE KING A CRITICAL ASPECT OF THE MITZVA OF HAKHEL?

BY RABBI GERSHON AVTZON

LONG LIVE THE REBBE MELECH HA'MOSHIACH FOREVER AND EVER!



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THE CROWN OF SHVAT

Chapter Five of Rabbi Shloma Majeski's Likkutei Mekoros
Vol. 2. (Underlined text is the compiler's emphasis.)

Translated by Boruch Merkur

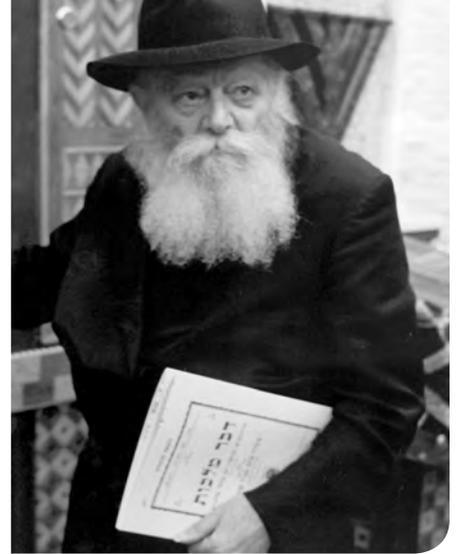
Where do we find that the Rebbe told us to publicize the identity of Moshiach? In fact, the Rebbe did more than that; he personally publicized in the media who is the Moshiach in our generation: "The Rebbe, my father-in-law, the nossi of our generation, is the Moshiach of our generation."

13. [...] Since MarCheshvan is the **first** month that emphasizes the *avoda* of man in the world [i.e., following Rosh HaShana, etc., the month of Tishrei, when the emphasis is on spirituality], to establish for G-d a home in the physical world, it includes within it, in a general sense, the months that follow it. Thus, the 20th of MarCheshvan, the Crown of MarCheshvan [twenty being numerically equivalent to "kesser – crown"], includes within it the "crowns" of the subsequent months: The crown of the month of **Kislev**, which concludes with the days of Chanuka, symbolic of the *chanukas ha'Mitzbeiach v'ha'Mikdash* (the inauguration of the Alter, as well as the Mikdash, the Holy Temple), and is in honor of the miracle of the oil, which is connected with the inner dimension of the Torah, "the oil of the Torah," which is revealed through the teachings of Chasidus in the month of Kislev; the crown of the month of **Teives**, "a month when the body benefits from a[nother] body" [because of the cold – Rashi], alluding to the benefit imparted to the Supernal Body, the Yesh HaAmiti, the True Existence, from the Lower Body, *yesh ha'nivra*, created existence; the crown of the month of **Shvat**,* the tenth of which

is the *hilula* of my revered father in-law, the Rebbe, when "all his deeds, his Torah, and his *avoda* that he did throughout the days of his life...are revealed and shine...and 'bring about salvation in the midst of the land'"**, as well as the crowns of the subsequent months, including the finale of Shnas HaTzaddik*** (the 90th year of the Rebbe's life), with, "O prosper it, the work of our hands," the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash by Melech HaMoshiach, "A king from the Davidic dynasty" (who "has merited the royal **crown**...for himself and his descendants...forevermore"), who "builds the Beis HaMikdash." May it happen this very moment, on Chai MarCheshvan (leading up to Chaf MarCheshvan), for the promise **has already been fulfilled**, "They will seek G-d, their L-rd, and Dovid their king" (as we have said in Kiddush Levana for the month of MarCheshvan, and with the addition of "amen," which indicates its fulfillment in the literal sense).

14. The topic of primary importance, however, is this:

In addition to what was explained above (in Section 11) – that Moshiach exists in the sense of his "spark" (the aspect of Yechida) residing within every single Jew – Moshiach exists in the literal sense as well (the general Yechida). Indeed, it is known that "in each generation there is born one from the descendants of Yehuda who is fit to be the Moshiach of the Jewish people," "one who, in terms of his righteousness, is fit to be the redeemer, and when the time comes,



G-d will reveal Himself to him and send him, etc." If only they would not have mixed in things that are undesirable, which act as obstacles and cause delays, etc., the advent of Moshiach would have taken place; Moshiach would have come in the literal sense.

But according to the announcement of my revered father in-law, the Rebbe, leader of our generation, the Moshiach of our generation, we have already completed and fulfilled all matters of *avoda*, and presently we are standing ready to welcome Moshiach Tzidkeinu. Thus, in our times (as above, Section 13), all obstacles and delays, etc., have been nullified. Therefore there is (not only the **existence** of Moshiach but) also the **revelation** of Moshiach. Now we must simply **welcome** Moshiach Tzidkeinu in the literal sense!

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaYeira, 18 MarCheshvan 5752; Seifer HaSichos 5752, pg. 94-95)

NOTES:

*Footnote 114: Shvat being the eleventh month ("*ashtei asar chodesh*"), which is connected with the aspect of **the crown**, which transcends the Ten S'firos.

** Footnote 116: And on **Chaf** [i.e., "kesser – the crown"], the twentieth of Shvat, the ten days (a complete number) are perfected; the tenth of the month attains excellence and perfection.

***Footnote 117: with the crown of the month of Nissan, "on the eleventh day," the number eleven having a connection with twenty (as above, Footnote 114).



*It would seem that there is not a single Chassid who does not carry inside him, in a hidden corner of his soul, a pure and precious diamond that he treasures above all else. This diamond is his special and unique moment with the Rebbe, whether the moment that his eyes met the Rebbe's eyes, the moment of some pivotal event in his life, or a moment of impact that changed the course of his life. It is this moment that he recalls when he needs to recharge his batteries, it is what he draws strength from when he is in need of salvation and pictures to himself the Rebbe's holy visage, it is the moment that he will tell his children and grandchildren about throughout the years. * The Beis Moshiach staff approached a number of Chassidim, of different geographical and family backgrounds, to share their special moment with our readers. * Presented in honor of Yud Shvat, sixty five years after the Rebbe officially accepted the nesius.*



MY MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

By Nosson Avrohom, Chaim Bruk, Menachem Ziegelboim, and Shneur Chaviv

RELIVING THE MOMENT - LIVING WITH THE REBBE

If you ask a Chassid, “Do you remember a special moment with the Rebbe that is always with you?” he won’t necessarily have an immediate answer for you. He will probably think a bit and you will see a certain look on his face, a gravity that is appropriate for this very personal subject.

He will weigh every word carefully, and you will sense the power of the moment in his life. This was his personal moment with the Rebbe, which infuses all the senses with the awareness that the Rebbe is always with a Chassid, senses him, thinks of him, endows him with strength, and believes in his ability to execute his shlichus.

Then he will think about his first yechidus with the Rebbe, about the fatherly smile, about the special instruction, and so on. Suddenly his face becomes calm and the gravity will turn into a big smile and his eyes will be fixed on some distant point and it will be apparent that he is reliving the moment.

How fitting is the amazing description of the Rebbe Rayatz in his sicha of Shavuos 5694/1934: **“One of the things that Anash and the T’mimim need to accustom themselves to is to picture ... whoever was in Lubavitch, heard a maamer, was in yechidus, visited the holy burial sites ... to picture in his mind in accordance with what he remembers, the holy sights that he saw and experienced when in Lubavitch ...**

When any one of the Chassidim and the T’mimim who were in Lubavitch during a farbrengen or a yechidus goes over in his thoughts in detail what he said and asked at the time, remembering the answer and the wording of the blessing he received – this sight arouses him from his slumber of foolishness and he becomes filled with renewed chayus.

There are no words with which to express how many consolations and hopes a memory like this inspires; such a memory makes material life easier, brings light into mundane life, and leads to fortitude of the heart in the animated avoda of his future life... (Likkutei Dibburim)

And when the Chassid will accede to your pleading, his heart will open and he will tell you about his personal moment with the Rebbe. The feeling of yearning will be contagious and for a moment you will be swept up with a feeling of hiskashrus that will come to the fore in the telling of the story accompanied by a feeling of Chassidic joy. This will instantly be followed with bitachon, warmth, and enthusiasm that are revealed in the heart of a Chassid when he thinks about – practically reliving – the scene again.

And the Rebbe’s words echo in his ears as though he heard them just now, injecting him with chayus, breathing Chassidic life into him, urging him to action, “What are we waiting for? It delays the Geula, it is already Erev Shabbos after midday,” don’t slacken off in your shlichus to bring about the hisgalus in the world.

Chaim Bruk

BE A MASHPIA

R' Michael Mishulovin



R' Michael Mishulovin, “the mashpia of Nachla,” is an integral part of life in Nachalat Har Chabad. At his farbrengens suffused with the rich authentic Chassidic flavor of yore, he demands from the listeners, with his trademark warmth, to live with the words of the Rebbe and dedicate themselves as Chassidim to his directives. The living model that he offers is itself enough to inspire one to renewed enthusiasm for the ways of Chassidim and Chassidus.

R' Michael merited to leave the USSR and move to Eretz Yisroel in 1969. He managed to settle briefly in Nachalat Har Chabad, and then set out for Tishrei with Rebbe. He speaks movingly of those first moments that he experienced in the presence of the Rebbe:

I saw the Rebbe for the first time when he was on his way to enter 770. I stood off on the side and the Rebbe walked straight towards the building, but turned his head in my direction and looked straight at me until he got inside. Those were intensely moving moments that completely drained away all the feelings of the years of waiting to leave Russia and merit to meet the Rebbe.

It was on the third day of Slichos, Elul 5729, and that night there was a farbrengen. The Rebbe spoke for a while, and at some point he asked, “Is there anyone present at the farbrengen from Nachlas Har Chabad?” There were two of us present, a Jew from Georgia and myself. I stood directly across from the Rebbe but at a distance and did not approach. It was true that I lived in Nachlat Har Chabad, but I had doubts at the time if I should stay there since my wife’s parents lived in B’nei Brak, and my brother who had got out before me lived in Kfar Chabad. That is why I was doubtful as to remaining in Nachla, and I leaned towards moving to Kfar Chabad.

The Rebbe asked again; those around me started to stare at me, and seeing that I was a new face started telling me to approach



the Rebbe. I had no choice and started walking towards the Rebbe. As I was moving forward, before I reached the Rebbe's place, the Rebbe pointed at me with his finger and asked, "From Nachalat Har Chabad?" and I nodded in the affirmative. The Rebbe then asked, "With a *hisyashvus* (i.e. permanence)?" Obviously, that question resolved all my doubts and I nodded my head again in the affirmative.

I approached the Rebbe's table. The Rebbe poured me *l'chaim* and said that according to the law one is required to first make a blessing on *mezonos*, and indicated to me to take from the plate that was near him. I said *l'chaim*, and the Rebbe answered, "*L'chaim v'livracha*." After that the Rebbe poured for me again, then gave me the bottle of *mashke* and said I should distribute it among those present and added, "To be a *mashpia* in Nachalat Har Chabad." I started to ask the Rebbe for a blessing for my brother who was not feeling well, but the Rebbe responded immediately, "We are discussing general matters, not personal matters."

In Nachla there lived an older Jew who had come from Leningrad, where he had worked in the production of sweet beverages. When he left Russia and arrived in Nachla, he wanted to continue working in that field and had offered me to be his partner. I had told him that I would ask the Rebbe. When I entered for my first *yechidus* during that Tishrei, I wrote about this on the note that I gave the Rebbe and inquired as to whether I should accept the offer. The Rebbe answered me (not exact wording), "For him it is good, but not for you. It is not appropriate for a *mashpia* to stand in a store and sell sweet drinks... *Sh'chita* is a possibility, *mila*, learning with another Jew, and from this will be *parnasa*."

I remember that I thought then naively, "Why is the Rebbe telling me to be a *mashpia*? Surely, those who came before me must have told him that I used to teach students over there..." Incidentally, during that month

of Tishrei, the Rebbe instructed that all those who had left Russia that year should stand next to him the entire time, at the *t'fillos* etc.

When I returned to Nachla, they appointed me as the *mashpia* for Anash. When R' Dovid Shkolnik a"h was by the Rebbe, the Rebbe gave him a copy of the *Kuntres Ahavas Yisroel* with his holy signature for him to serve as an emissary to deliver it to the *mashpia* of Nachla. The truth is that in Nachla at the time there was the *mashpia* R' Shalom Eliyahu Vilenkin, who was much older than me, but for some reason when he came to Nachla he gave me the pamphlet. That is how I merited receiving the *Kuntres* from the Rebbe with his holy signature.

Undoubtedly, that moment when I received my first direct instruction from the Rebbe after I arrived is something I can never forget. And it accompanies me every moment of my *shlichus* in Nachla, after the Rebbe established that I should become a *mashpia* in Nachalat Har Chabad and with a "*hisyashvus*," until the complete revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, immediately now.

THE REBBE SPOKE TO MY THOUGHTS

R' Yitzchok Lifsh



R' Yitzchok Lifsh is the director of Tzach in Tzfas. His net is spread far beyond the city limits of Tzfas, reaching the army bases all across Northern Israel and the Golan. He is one of the Chabad activists who work to gather signatures of rabbis and public figures accepting the kingship of the Rebbe. He has many special moments with the Rebbe and carefully chooses to share the following two stories.

In 5739/1978, I merited to spend Tishrei in the presence of the Rebbe. The emotions ran high since this was the first Tishrei following the heart incident the previous year.

Throughout that month, I chose to grab a spot on the bleachers and not push into the standing crowds (which everybody referred to as the "washing machine"). I managed to sweat a little less, but I was not always able to hear the *sichos* clearly. At one of the *farbrengens* towards the end of the month, a feeling of having lost out on an opportunity began to gnaw at me, as here the month was almost over and I wasn't taking anything with me.

As the thought came to me, I heard the Rebbe saying that every person who is present for Tishrei takes away

something from here, the question is what and how much.

Another amazing instance of open divine sight occurred with me three years later in 5742. That was my k'vutza year. At one of the farbrengens on Shabbos, I suddenly felt extremely tired and I almost dozed off. Naturally, all of the pushing and crowding and heat can cause even an alert person to become exhausted, and when I realized that I was beginning to doze off I felt terrible. I thought to myself, "Why is this happening to me? I slept well enough earlier."

As these thoughts came over me, I heard the Rebbe say in middle of the farbrengen, "When one reads *Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum* (the Torah portion twice and the Targum once), this is a segula against tiredness." The Rebbe added that the numerical value of "Targum" is the same as that of "tardema" (deep sleep). I immediately jolted awake and on the spot I resolved that it would never again come to a situation when the time for the Rebbe's farbrengen on Shabbos would come and I would not have already completed *Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum*.

THE REBBE GAVE ME THE KEY TO SUCCESS

R' Yisroel Mifi



R' Yisroel Mifi of Shikun Chabad in Lud is a man of action. For twenty-seven years now, he has been working as a teacher in the Chabad School in Nachalat Har Chabad, as a couples and family counselor, and in his free time he is also a sofer. He

also finds time for mitzvaim at the airport.

The most moving moment for me was in 5748. I got married on 21 Sivan of that year. Our financial situation was not good and when I tried to arrange things, the situation did not improve. So I wrote a long letter to the Rebbe and asked for a bracha for parnasa.

My wife, whose birthday is 19 Tammuz, wrote to the Rebbe in the margin of that letter that she had made three good resolutions for her birthday which she noted.

On Tisha B'Av I received a phone call from R' Lipa Kurtzweil.

"Are you Yisroel Mifi?" he asked in his direct way.

"Yes."

"You wrote a letter to the Rebbe?"

"Yes."

"So take a pen and write down: to follow the customs

for a birthday – as for him to daven all the t'fillos, I will mention it at the tziyun."

"Are you sure that's the answer?" I asked. "I did not write about a birthday."

"You are Yisroel Mifi?" he asked again.

"Yes."

"Then that is the answer you got."

I must confess that at first I thought there was a mistake, but then I consulted with my mashpia, R' Avrohom (Bumi) Friedland and I figured it out. I had always considered myself a rational person. I thought things through. And here, the Rebbe wrote me this – you want a bracha for parnasa or for anything else? Make a good resolution and pray.

Since then, with any problem I experience, I pray and I see salvation. I have a number of stories to illustrate this. For example, I have a daughter who for four years did not have children. At a certain point, we went to the gravesite of Rashbi and we prayed and within a few weeks there was good news. The same with my son, when he had questions in various situations, we also went to the gravesite of Rashbi where we prayed and everything worked out wonderfully.

I feel that in that answer the Rebbe gave me the key to life – if you have a problem, whether financial or otherwise, simply pray.

MILITARY TRIAL IN THE YECHIDUS ROOM

R' Refael Heruti



R' Refael Heruti of Nachalat Har Chabad is known for the books he wrote on the topics of Geula and Moshiach. He was one of the pioneers in this area. He tells about a moment when he experienced that "a word of the Rebbe does not return empty-handed," following an instruction from the Rebbe which he received in his first yechidus.

I went to the Rebbe for the first time for Tishrei 5734. It was upon the urging of R' Meir Blizinsky a"h who, after I was niskarev, learned with me for an entire year. When he saw that I was fully committed he urged me to go to the Rebbe for Tishrei.

During that Tishrei I had yechidus. I was in the middle of my army service at the time, but since it was my last year in the army, I told the Rebbe that when I finished my army duty I wanted to learn in yeshiva in Kfar Chabad. The Rebbe told me, "Keep the s'darim

of yeshiva in your free time.” By this the Rebbe meant that I should join the yeshiva even before I finished my army service, during my free time. Every day, from four in the afternoon, I would become a yeshiva bachur until the next morning.

On the base where I served, they would have an evening where they brought all kinds of entertainers, hypnotists etc., which I wasn’t interested in at all. This took place in the evening and I would leave, as the Rebbe told me to do, and travel to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad. I noticed that others were being cited for not showing up and participating, but nobody bothered me. I could see that by carrying out what the Rebbe told me to do he was running things so there wouldn’t be any complaints, disciplinary hearings or other problems.

One day, toward the end of Adar, the Major from whom I took orders called me and said, “You have a disciplinary hearing.” He told me that until that day he had covered for me with all kinds of excuses, because he felt somewhat close to me since I put on t’fillin with him. But that day he had used up all his excuses and he had no choice but to agree to put me on trial.

I was sentenced to being grounded at the base for seven days. I had to sign in every hour until ten at night and then I could go to sleep in the “detention room.” What actually happened was every night at ten after my last signing in I would hitch a ride and go to yeshiva. At the yeshiva I had a chavrusa who waited for me, as we had arranged, and we learned for about an hour of Nigleh and an hour of Chassidus until one in the morning.

On Thursday of that week of being grounded, I went as usual but there were no rides to hitch. At eleven I had no choice but to return to the base. I went to the shul and met the Chaplain. I learned a sicha of the Rebbe with him at the end of which he asked me, “Where are you sleeping?”

I told him, “In the detention room.”

“If you want, I have an empty bed in my room.”

It was late and I was happy to accept his offer.

The next day was Erev Shabbos Mevarchim Nissan and I just could not remain stuck on the base. I went to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad. I was there the entire Shabbos which was amazing. Usually, the mashpia R’ Mendel Futerfas a”h finished davening at three and then he would farbreng until Mincha. That Shabbos they davened Mincha at five and then farbrenged nonstop until the middle of the night. It was such an elevated atmosphere and there was such joy that it was impossible to leave.

When I returned to the base, the Major surprised me and said, “Why do you have another trial?”

I said, “I did not spend Shabbos here grounded.” I was sure that was the reason.

He said, “Are you out of your mind? They’ll put you in jail for seventy days!”

I was frightened by this because I assumed he knew what would happen. I called R’ Binyamin Zilberstrom and asked him, “Do me a favor, call the Rebbe and ask for a bracha. What will I do about Pesach if I’m in jail?”

I don’t remember whether R’ Binyamin was able to contact the Rebbe’s secretary, but he gave me advice and said two things: “Write a letter to the Rebbe and put it in the weekly Likkutei Sichos as the Rebbe said to do in a letter about Yud Shvat. And when you go for the trial, think of it as going to the Rebbe for yechidus.”

I was standing at the hearing and thought to myself, now I am going to the Rebbe for yechidus. The officer was standing and reading the accusations, “The accused is charged that on Thursday, after signing in with the Duty Officer to certify his presence, he was seen walking toward his house.”

 **I feel that in that answer the Rebbe gave me the key to life.**

I immediately said, “What?! I learned in the shul with the Chaplain. I was on base.”

The officers sent someone to find the Chaplain but they did not find him. In the end, the officer declared, “I don’t care about that. Even if you were here, since you did not sleep in the detention room, it is as though you were not on base, which is why you are being given the conditional sentence of fourteen days incarceration.” Meaning, I would be punished only if I did it again and from the get-go they spoke to me only about Thursday and not a word about Shabbos!

The truth is that at ten at night I left R’ Mendel’s farbrengen, davened Maariv, and left for the base because I was nervous, after all. When I arrived at the base, I went to the Duty Officer and asked him, “Do me a favor, and don’t tell anyone that I wasn’t here for Shabbos. I am very particular about Pesach and I’m afraid I will have to sit in jail.” He did not answer that he would give me a break but it seems that, miraculously, he did not tell. And my Major did not want me to stand trial to begin with.

As I said, I thought of that trial as though I was having yechidus and I interpreted it as though the Rebbe was demanding of me, ‘Why weren’t you in yeshiva on Thursday as I told you’ and I had given up on finding a ride. I knew that I could have responded that I would

end up coming late and missing the learning so should I have gone just to sleep in the yeshiva?! But the sentence at the hearing was, “If you didn’t sleep there, you weren’t there,” or as I interpreted it, if you did not sleep in yeshiva, then you were not actually in the yeshiva. (Years later, I opened to a letter of the Rebbe in which he says that even sleeping in yeshiva is a big thing).

I saw that I did not lose out by carrying out the Rebbe’s instruction; on the contrary, what the Rebbe said established what would be with me and not the Major or the Command Officer. It was a special moment which deeply instilled in me that “what the Rebbe says is not for naught!”

TWO MOMENTS OF PARTING

R’ Yigal Pizem



R’ Yigal Pizem has been the Chabad rav in Kiryat Shmuel for decades and one of those leading the Chabad revolution in Krayot. R’ Pizem merited many moving and special moments over the years and he shares one such moment that is

always with him, both in his personal and communal life.

In my mind I have etched two special moments of parting that I had with the Rebbe. It was after a visit to 770 for Lag B’Omer 5734. I planned on returning to Eretz Yisroel but had not yet received a bracha from the Rebbe for the trip. In those days, whoever returned to Eretz Yisroel did not do so before receiving the Rebbe’s bracha. I did not know what to do – should I go without a bracha or stay until I received a bracha?

At the time, R’ Yisroel Glitzenstein was staying in 770 and he suggested that I run over and wait near the entrance to the Rebbe’s room to ask him for a bracha to leave. That’s what I did. When the Rebbe appeared, everyone in the corridor quickly disappeared and only I remained standing there. The Rebbe took out the keys to open the door to his office and then I boldly spoke up, in Yiddish. “Rebbe, I am leaving soon.” The Rebbe looked at me and I could see that he was deep in thought and it was like he had to tear himself away from something in order to relate to my question.

The Rebbe blessed me with a successful trip and that I should relate good news. That moment near the Rebbe and his penetrating gaze are etched in my mind till today. Since then, whenever I can, I tell the Rebbe good news.

Another special moment of parting took place in

5745. I had acquiesced to the suggestion of my friend R’ Dovid Kratz a”h to go to the Rebbe in the summer, thus eliminating the entire complicated procedure needed to ask the Education Ministry for permission to fly as well as the time limit they always gave us.

I flew to the Rebbe and spent all of Tammuz there and a few days in Av. That was the longest period of time that I stayed in 770.

In the middle of Tammuz is when the s’farim episode came to light and we could see how anguished the Rebbe was. It was apparent that it was taking a lot out of the Rebbe to the point that it was hard to ask the Rebbe for a bracha at that time.

Before I returned home, the Rebbe came out for Mincha in the small zal and I stood behind the Rebbe. I grabbed every moment that I could to see the Rebbe before I left for home. I thought, “Who knows when I will be able to see the Rebbe again?”

As I had this thought, the Rebbe suddenly turned all the way around and looked into my eyes. I froze in place and obviously, I could not hold his gaze for more than a few seconds before lowering my eyes. It was too great a light for me. That scene is etched in my mind and accompanies me all my life. I remember it as though it happened this morning.

THE NASI HA’DOR TELLS YOU, “DON’T DESPAIR, I AM HERE.”

R’ Dovber Gurewitz



R’ Dovber Gurewitz of Kiryat Malachi spreads the wellsprings by putting together videos of the Rebbe. He was the first to initiate the practice of showing a video of the Rebbe at chuppa ceremonies.

It was at the unusual farbrengen that took place on the first day of Rosh HaShana 5750. I think it was the only time that the Rebbe farbrenged on this date. For the Rebbeim, the first day of Rosh HaShana was a tense day of silence and saying a lot of T’hillim. None of the Rebbeim farbrenged on this day.

It was almost three in the afternoon, about half an hour after the davening was over, when the Rebbe suddenly walked in for a farbrengen. In the first sicha, he explained the reason for this sudden farbrengen, connecting it to the fact that the first day of Rosh HaShana fell out on Shabbos, based on what Chazal say on the verse, “and Moshe gathered,” “so that future generations will learn from you to make gatherings every Shabbos.”



That Tishrei I was still a bachur and it was my second time at the Rebbe. I wasn't experienced enough to know to grab a good spot quickly (in addition to which, people had their set places) but since the farbrengen was a surprise, I managed to get a spot behind the backs of the senior Chassidim who sat on the farbrengen platform, near the windows of the women's section. I was able to hang suspended about three meters above the farbrengen platform and I held on to a strap, between heaven and earth. It took a lot out of me.

Still, I was pleased that I was finally able to see the farbrengen properly. Of course, I saw the Rebbe from behind.

Between the first and second sicha, I asked for someone to bring me a cup of wine and I lifted it up, waiting for the Rebbe to say l'chaim to me, as is customary. I waited patiently for a long time while the Rebbe went from person to person and wished each of them l'chaim with a nod of his head. Once or twice the Rebbe turned around and also said l'chaim to the senior Chassidim who sat beneath me, while I still waited for the Rebbe to look up and discover me and say l'chaim. But it didn't happen.

After the second sicha I waited again with my cup but the Rebbe did not look up so high, where I was. Since I was a young kid and inexperienced, I had already despaired of the Rebbe noticing me and I began to look around curiously at the large crowd that filled the shul. I was no longer looking expectantly at the Rebbe but at the people.

Suddenly, someone pushed me. A friend standing near me was shaking me. "The Rebbe is looking at you!" he said in a loud whisper. At first, I didn't understand what was happening. I looked toward the

Rebbe and saw the Rebbe gazing at me. Afterward, they told me that the Rebbe looked at me and I hadn't noticed and he simply waited for me. The Rebbe had to not only raise his gaze but actually lift his head back to the great height where I was. I quickly raised my cup that was in my free hand and then the Rebbe nodded and said l'chaim.

That split second taught me that you can never give up hope, but if for some reason you do, the Rebbe is there for you. Till today, when one of my children says something like, "Abba, I won't succeed," I tell them this story and add, "Don't despair, because the Rebbe the Nasi Ha'dor is already holding you and telling you, 'Don't give up. I am here.'"

THE REBBE CAME STRAIGHT OVER TO ME

R' Uri Holtzman



R' Uri Holtzman is a member of the city council in Beitar Ilit and Chairman of the Forum of Chabad Elected Officials in Eretz Yisroel. He used to be a shliach in Geneva, Switzerland. In recent years he has been very involved in public service. He is the son of R' Yaakov Tzvi Holtzman, known to have a close relationship with the Rebbe's family.

A special moment engraved in my mind is from the time I was with my father R' Yaakov Tzvi by the Rebbe for Shavuot 5736. I was a boy about half a year before my bar mitzva.

After Yom Tov, we went to the airport to fly back home to Belgium, but we missed the flight. Having no choice, we returned to 770. There was no natural way for the Rebbe to know that we had returned because we hadn't told anyone, but just went directly back to 770. My father, who was in the year of mourning, went over to daven Mincha for the amud in the big zal while the Rebbe was davening Mincha at that same time in the small zal on the first floor.

While my father was davening the chazaras ha'shatz, the secretary, R' Leibel Groner suddenly walked in and whispered to me, "When you finish Mincha, tell your father to go up with you and wait together in Gan Eden HaTachton (the hallway outside the Rebbe's room)." I whispered this to my father and he quickly finished the davening so as to get to Gan Eden HaTachton before the Rebbe.

When we arrived at the first floor we took the elevator to the apartment of the Rebbe Rayatz, and from

“That split second taught me that you can never give up hope, but if for some reason you do, the Rebbe is there for you.”

there we went down the internal stairs to Gan Eden HaTachton and waited for the Rebbe.

The door suddenly opened. It was the Rebbe returning from Mincha. He was holding a small Tanya (afterward, the bachurim told me that the Rebbe glanced into this Tanya during the chazaras ha'shatz). As a young boy I stood next to my father, and when the Rebbe came in I took a step back for I assumed the Rebbe wanted to talk to my father and I did not want to be in the way. But the Rebbe came right over to me so that I retreated even further until I felt the wall behind me.

Then the Rebbe held out the Tanya and said to me, “Learn in this Tanya until your bar mitzva, at least once a week.” Then the Rebbe gave me a Belgian hundred franc bill for me to give it to tz'daka for chinuch.

Then the Rebbe gave my father a thousand Belgian francs for activities throughout Belgium and brought another hundred francs and said, “Give it to your balabusta for the women's mitzvaim.”

This scene, which was completely unexpected, with the Rebbe coming right over to me with quick steps and penetrating eyes, is etched into my mind until today. It was the first time I had a face to face encounter with the Rebbe.

As I said, we were supposed to be on the plane and the Rebbe had no natural way of knowing that we had returned to Crown Heights. When the Rebbe came right over to us after the davening he was already prepared with the Tanya and Belgian bills and it was most astounding.

HAVDALA NEAR THE REBBE

R' Yosef Yitzchok Lipsker



R' Y. Y. Lipsker has been on shlichus for many years in Natrat Ilit. Among other things, he runs a Tiferes Z'keanim kollel and helps the needy. He tells of a special moment with the Rebbe which is always with him in his shlichus.

I remember a special moment from when I was learning on K'vutza by the Rebbe in 5729-5730. For

Havdala after the davening in the small zal upstairs, there was generally the same person who recited it in the Rebbe's presence. It was R' Blesovsky or someone else, but it sometimes happened that the regular person wasn't there and they would have someone else do it.

One time, on such an occasion, I suddenly felt myself being pushed and there I was, standing next to the Rebbe. I had no choice but to recite Havdala. I cannot forget those moments. The Rebbe stood and looked at me during Havdala and I felt that the Rebbe was scanning my entire being. I felt that the Rebbe saw every thought, word and action of mine without anything to block it. I trembled. It is hard to describe moments like that. On the one hand, I was thrilled to have this privilege, but I also felt real terror. The Rebbe stood and looked at me ... and it was under those circumstances where I was making Havdala and the Rebbe was listening to me. I could not have imagined such a scene but there I was.

That is a moment that goes with me all the time, an unforgettable moment. When I feel the need to fill up on chayus and strength to do the Rebbe's shlichus, I think of that moment. I cannot say that every Motzaei Shabbos during Havdala I think of it, but on special occasions it surfaces.

A moment like that, which happened out of the blue, without my having prepared for it, without my knowing about it ahead of time, instills the awareness that we need to be prepared for the moment, very soon, when we will welcome the Rebbe with his hisgalus and the Rebbe will look at us. We need to try to be deserving of this.

THE REBBE WANTS ME TO BE IN GOOD SPIRITS

R' Tuvia Bolton



R' Tuvia Bolton was rosh yeshiva of Ohr HaT'mimim in Kfar Chabad for many years. He is one of the pioneers who were mekarev many people to Judaism through Chassidic music. Today too, he works in counseling students along with his musical spreading of the wellsprings.

I remember two moments of a special smile that I received from the Rebbe, and both are engraved in my neshama. It was in Tishrei 5744. One Shabbos I was standing next to the table where they read the Torah. It was terribly crowded as it is in Tishrei. For Maftir, the baal koreh called up the Rebbe. The pushing was

terrible and I did not understand how the Rebbe would be able to pass through to the bima.

Suddenly, like a miracle, everything opened up. Until today, I don't know how it happened but a pathway opened up to the width of two people for the Rebbe. Then I saw the Rebbe coming toward me and the Rebbe looking at me with a very big smile. I did not want to take my eyes off the Rebbe and I gazed back at him as though hypnotized. Only after ten seconds which seemed like an eternity did I move my gaze because my eyes hurt. The Rebbe continued on his way to the bima.

In 5735, before I left the US for Eretz Yisroel, I asked the secretary, R' Groner, to arrange a yechidus for me.

When I walked in, I told the Rebbe that I had various shidduch suggestions, but I felt I wasn't ready yet for marriage because I wasn't immersed enough in Chassidus, etc. The Rebbe told me, "There is a saying, don't postpone for two days from now when you can postpone for tomorrow."

At the end of the yechidus, the Rebbe gave me three coins and said: One coin give to tz'daka in Eretz Yisroel, another coin give to tz'daka in yeshiva, and give the third coin wherever you want.

I took the first coin and put it in one pocket and the second coin in another pocket because I didn't want to mix them up. The Rebbe suddenly smiled broadly and said, "You don't have to give it in that order and not even these particular coins. You can replace them and give that to tz'daka."

I innocently told the Rebbe that I thought that if I give the coins to tz'daka in the wrong order, then ... (I think I used the exaggerated term like the moon might fall down) and the Rebbe smiled and laughed.

These special looks, the simcha, the smile and laughter – all this gave me lots of strength and are etched in my heart until today. From that I understood that the Rebbe simply wants us to be in good spirits.

A MOMENT OF BEAMING LIGHT

Rabbi Dr. Tal Nir



One of the special personalities in Nachla is Rabbi Dr. Tal Nir, the "rofeh yedid" of Nachalat Har Chabad. He relates graciously to everyone and his beloved songs accompany every special event in the history of Nachla. He has a special "koch" in the letter in a Torah campaign. He takes every opportunity to register more and more children

for the Torah scroll for children. He shares two special moments he experienced with the Rebbe:

First moment: I went to the Rebbe for the first time on Erev Shavuos 5746/1986. I submitted a note through the secretary R' Binyamin Klein a"h and announced my arrival. It was a number of years after I had become involved with Chabad in 5742. I would write letters to the Rebbe, but this was the first time I was there to see the Rebbe in 770. I expected the Rebbe to give me shalom aleichem ...

On Shavuos there was a farbrengen in 770 with the Rebbe and I stood on the pyramid among the Chassidim. The Rebbe said a sicha in Yiddish of course, a language I did not understand. During the niggunim, between sichos, the Rebbe responded with "I'chaim v'livracha" to the Chassidim. Then, during one of the niggunim, the Rebbe suddenly began to urge the crowd on by clapping his hands and then, he even got up and began to dance in place, raising up the entire congregation of Chassidim to the heights.

The moment the Rebbe rose, everyone wanted to see the Rebbe well. Those on the pyramid also jumped, as a result of which, the crowding which until then had held everyone up loosened, and the entire pyramid collapsed. I fell but I thought, who cares, so I fell, but I want to see the Rebbe dance. I tried focus my gaze but could only see the back of the person in front of me. Then a space opened up through which I could see the Rebbe dancing in place with great joy. I was looking at the Rebbe and suddenly the Rebbe gave me such a smile that was simply a bundle of warmth, of light, of love, that passed through the space straight to me!

At first I thought maybe the Rebbe is looking at someone else but then I realized that nobody but me saw this. I understood the smile to be a hearty shalom aleichem. This moment is always with me. I also went for Shavuos 5748 and 5749 but did not get a smile like I got the first time.

Over the years, I have come to realize that the Rebbe had actually given me a lesson for life, to beam light to every Jew. I cannot forget this moment with the Rebbe, and if for a moment I do not smile, the patients in the clinic immediately remind me about my moment with the Rebbe. "Dr. Tal, why aren't you smiling?" And I catch myself, for this is a horaa from the Rebbe!

Second moment: The wife of the first mayor of Kiryat Malachi, David Aboudi, was a patient in my clinic. One day, she mentioned that she was planning on visiting the United States. I asked her, "Will you be going to New York?" When she said yes, I suggested that she pass by the Rebbe for dollars on Sunday. "Ask for a bracha for you and your husband," I told her. She

liked the idea.

More than three months later, I found myself in a dilemma. I was offered the opportunity to continue my education to specialize as a family doctor. Pursuing this specialty meant being practically cut off from the family, Shabbos, and holidays; it meant doing rotations etc. for four and a half years. Everyone urged me go for it. R' Yaroslavsky told me this is what the Rebbe wants and friends pushed me. It was a Friday and I was in such a state, not knowing what to do, whether to sign that I was going to pursue this specialty or not.

I was in the middle of shopping for Shabbos when Mrs Aboudi came over to me and said, "Dr. Tal, do you know that I have something for you?"

I said, "No."

She took out her wallet and removed a dollar. On the dollar it said, "For Dr. Tal, from the Rebbe."

"What's this?" I asked her.

She told me, "I went to the Rebbe with my husband as you told me to do. They told the Rebbe that this is the first mayor of Kiryat Malachi and the Rebbe said he remembers him from the letters. The Rebbe gave him a dollar to continue helping Chabad and gave me a dollar for helping my husband. We continued walking and they told us the Rebbe was calling us back. We went back and the Rebbe asked, 'Who sent you here?' We said, 'Our doctor, Dr. Tal Nir.' Then the Rebbe gave us another dollar and said, 'Give this to the doctor who sent you.'"

Mrs. Aboudi finished her story and handed me the dollar. From the time she returned from Eretz Yisroel, for three months, the dollar was in her wallet. She had visited the clinic several times and could have given me the dollar. But, by Divine Providence, she gave me the only dollar that I received from the Rebbe in my role as doctor, three months later, on the day I was going to make a fateful decision. I considered this a clear answer from the Rebbe and I signed up for the specialty. The dollar goes everywhere with me with the words written on it, "For Dr. Tal, from the Rebbe."

SPECIAL APPROVAL FROM THE REBBE

R' Moshe Dickstein



R' Moshe Dickstein is a shliach in Beer Sheva. For many years he worked for the Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks. He is a prominent person in the Chabad community in Beer Sheva as well as in the volunteer activities in the community.

It was a Monday, the 20th of Cheshvan 5736. I was learning in the yeshiva in Morristown. I would go with my fellow bachurim to 770 every now and then, mainly for the Rebbe's farbrengens.

That day, I left yeshiva alone and went to Crown Heights because my glasses had broken. The rosh yeshiva, R' Mordechai Mentlick, had an arrangement with the optician on Kingston Avenue for the bachurim who needed it, to provide free glasses.

Since it was a Monday, the Rebbe came out for the Torah reading. In the meantime, for the Rebbe's minyan, I wore R' Yitzchok Blizinsky's glasses and I guess they looked funny on me. At the end of the davening, the Rebbe's secretary, R' Binyamin Klein a"h, came over to me and asked, "What are you doing here?"

I didn't know what he wanted from me and I asked him why he cared. Then he had to disclose to me that it wasn't he who was asking the question. I instantly realized that it was the Rebbe himself who was asking. I told him that my glasses would be ready at one in the afternoon and when I got them, I would return to Morristown.

Afterward it occurred to me that if the Rebbe was asking about me, it was very likely that there would be a farbrengen that day, and so why was I hurrying to leave? I brought a note to R' Klein in which I asked the Rebbe whether there would be a farbrengen, and if yes, could I stay and not return to yeshiva. R' Binyamin dismissed what I wrote and said the Rebbe is going to the Ohel and there probably won't be a farbrengen. I said, "What do you care – can you give this note to the Rebbe anyway?"

An hour later, R' Klein called me and asked me to go to R' Chadakov's office where he told me, "The Rebbe said you should stay but nobody should see you, because if you stay, everyone will realize that there is a farbrengen tonight and the bachurim from all the yeshivos in the area will come here."

I went to my room in an apartment on 520 Crown Street which was an apartment for bachurim. I was there all day until evening and I waited, as I was told. After sunset, the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and there was Mincha and then Maariv. Then the Rebbe announced a farbrengen.

I was the only one from the yeshiva in Morristown who attended that farbrengen with the direct instruction of the Rebbe. I felt how much the Rebbe cared about me and looked out for me, giving me a personal, special instruction to stay for the farbrengen.

THE FIRST THING TO DO IS TO LEARN TORAH!

R' Sholom Dovber Garelik



Since he made aliya in 5731, R' Sholom Dovber Garelik of Nachalat Har Chabad, along with his learning in kollel, works with Russian immigrants around the country under the auspices of Shamir. The work intensified particularly from 5750, under the auspices of the Chamah organization, with the great wave of immigration. Countless brissin and chuppos were arranged by him during those years.

What follows is his recounting of his first yechidus with the Rebbe, the defining moment for a Chassid:

In Russia, I studied construction engineering (in the evenings, after helping my father, R' Menachem Mendel Garelik a"h, in the businesses in which he employed many Shabbos observant Jews). Since I was a student, I was exempt from army duty (for a Jew, the army was a huge disaster), but after four years of study, before I received my diploma, I was expelled because I had submitted a request to emigrate.

When I arrived in Eretz Yisroel on 14 Elul 5731 with my wife and three children, friends gave me ideas about how to make a living. Some of them advised me to finish my engineering studies and some of them advised me to go into business.

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5732, I went to the Rebbe for the first time with my father-in-law, R' Sholom Eliyahu Vilenkin a"h. I wrote everything in a note and handed it to the Rebbe when I had yechidus. The Rebbe read it rapidly, folding over each line after reading it.

The thought occurred to me, why am I bothering the Rebbe with these material queries. My mouth opened and, literally from the inner depths of my soul, a question emerged, "Perhaps I can learn in kollel?" I went on to say in Yiddish that in Russia I had not had the opportunity to learn in a yeshiva, since there were no active yeshivos in my area and I had only learned with my father and grandfather, with my father-in-law, and with the rav of Samarkand, R' Eliyahu Levin.

I will never forget that moment. The Rebbe stood up, while still holding the note in both hands, and said, "Certainly, yes, and this should be an example for the other young men who come from Russia. The first thing to do is to sit and learn Torah and it should be done with the wife's consent."

When I told my wife (who had remained in Eretz Yisroel and first went to the Rebbe on Yud Shvat of that year) what the Rebbe said, I immediately received



her consent. She said, "If the Rebbe said so, surely it will be good that way, despite our financial situation." I returned to Eretz Yisroel and went to R' Avrohom Zaltzman who was in charge of the kollel. He sent me to R' Efraim Wolf in Lud, who at first tried to push me off (for how would I support a wife and three children on 500 liras a month?) But after receiving the affirmation from the secretariat that this is what the Rebbe told me, he accepted me in the kollel.

I learned in kollel for two years. Then I studied sh'chita with R' Avrohom Zaltzman for half a year and was a shochet for fifteen years along with R' Avrohom Levin, R' Nosson Kanelsky, and R' Avrohom Hagar, with whom I had previously learned together in kollel. Later on, my wife told me that with the 500 liras a month I got from the kollel there was a special bracha and the money sufficed and went only for good things.

It is known that an instruction from the Rebbe at the first yechidus affects a Chassid's entire life, and in recent years we merited to host the kollel in Nachalat Har Chabad headed by R' Shmuel Cohen, and the kollel Tiferes Z'keinim Levi Yitzchok headed by R' Shmuel Yechezkel Cohen in the shuls that I manage in the Chamah building in Nachla. The circle has closed as my friends, with whom I learned in kollel and who I worked alongside in sh'chita, are learning in the kollel Tiferes Z'keinim. Of course, I try to join them in the shiurim in the kollel as the Rebbe told me in my first yechidus.

GUT SHABBOS, GUT YOM TOV!

R' Nechemia Schmerling



For decades now, R' Nechemia Schmerling has been working on shlichus in Kfar Yona. In his pleasant manner he succeeds in making the Name of Heaven beloved to all. He is also one of the shluchim who stands

out when it comes to spreading the Besuras Ha'Geula and the Goel.

It was in Elul 5742. I went to the Rebbe for my first Tishrei. When I arrived at 770 for the first time, the Rebbe was at the Ohel. They said that he would be back soon and daven Mincha and Maariv and I would be able to see him.

Since I had already visited many other Chassidic courts, I thought this would be similar. I stood in a good spot in the small zal and waited for the Rebbe to return. Then the Rebbe walked in and I couldn't take my eyes off him.

During the chazaras ha'shatz, I suddenly noticed that the Rebbe was looking up from his siddur at me. I was a kid and in my foolishness and chutzpa I stared back. The Rebbe continued to look at me until he lowered his eyes back to the siddur.

At the farbrengen on 13 Tishrei 5743, the Rebbe spoke at length about the Chassidim looking at him during the davening. He devoted an entire sicha to this and said that from his part, he would daven alone in his room, but he wants to daven with the congregation and there is nothing to be gained from looking at him etc.

I think that was the only sicha that I understood properly throughout that month of Tishrei. That is when I found myself in a tremendous state of confusion over what had transpired previously.

On Shabbos Chol HaMoed Sukkos, I was sitting in the sukka for guests between the building of the library and 770. It was the afternoon and only a few bachurim were sitting there. Suddenly there was a hush. The Rebbe had left the library building for 770. The Rebbe walked on the path and I and another two bachurim stood near the steps and waited for him. The Rebbe came closer and wished each of us separately, "Gut Shabbos, Gut Yom Tov!" In that moment I saw, once again, the same clear depth in the Rebbe's holy eyes in how he looked at me during that chazaras ha'shatz.

It was a split second and the Rebbe went to his room. The feeling that filled our hearts was enormous and with a burst of emotion that we had merited to have the Rebbe personally bless us, we began to dance. I felt it was the Rebbe's "shalom aleichem" to me.

HISKASHRUS AT FIRST SIGHT

R' Boruch Mamou



R' Boruch, who lives in Yerushalayim, relates:

I began becoming interested in Judaism in the 60's when I was in my early twenties. We lived in a suburb

of Paris and were a very honorable, traditional, Tunisian family, but I looked for more. I visited all the rabbis then in Paris. I was connected to all the Torah personalities, to the chief rabbis of Paris and France and to rabbis of large communities. I presented all my tough questions to them. They all tried answering me, but I felt it wasn't enough for me.

One day, I went to a famous rosh yeshiva in Paris in those days, by the name of Rabbi Toledano. I began asking him all my questions. I told him that I had been to see all the rabbis and none of them had satisfied me. He listened and said, "I think you belong to the Lubavitcher Rebbe."

That is how I went to New York. I met a bachur from France there by the name of Itche Nemanov, today the dean of Tomchei T'mimim in Brunoy. We immediately hit it off; I told him that I have questions in Judaism and I came to ask the Rebbe. He explained how to arrange an appointment, but I said that before I formally met the Rebbe I wanted to see him. Itche told me to wait in the small zal and I would see the Rebbe when he came out for Mincha.

I stood in the small zal, not knowing how things worked there. When the Rebbe came out I was far off and couldn't see him. I was disappointed but suddenly there was terrible pushing and I don't know how, but suddenly I was standing the closest to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe suddenly turned around and looked at me. I don't know how long that took, maybe a few seconds but for me it was an eternity. The Rebbe focused his gaze on me and then turned back around and began to daven.

I wasn't a Chassid, and I had never seen the Rebbe before that, but I felt like I had been electrified. Throughout the t'filla I stood behind the Rebbe with my entire body shaking. At that moment I realized that he wasn't just another rabbi as I had met before, and I knew that it made no difference what he would or wouldn't answer, because I wanted to bond with him and receive his guidance for my life.

That was my most special moment with the Rebbe; hiskashrus at first sight.

After that first experience, I submitted a letter to the Rebbe in which I wrote everything on my mind. An answer quickly emerged in which the Rebbe told me to say T'hilim every day and to check my t'fillin.

I did the first instruction, but as far as checking the t'fillin, I thought it was unnecessary since I had bought them two weeks earlier from the father of R' Mulle Azimov.

When I met my friend Itche again he asked about the Rebbe's response. I told him that I said T'hilim but I

did not think there was any reason to check the t'fillin. Itche really gave it to me over the head, "If the Rebbe said so, then you check them!" and he took my t'fillin to be checked.

Two days later he was looking for me in 770. When he found me he said, "Boruch, you have to change all the parshiyos." I was in shock. I gave him all my spending money for my trip to New York and he bought me new parshiyos.

A few days later I had yechidus. I had one foot in the door and the Rebbe addressed me in French and asked me, "Did you do what I told you?"

A SICHA FOR THREE BACHURIM

R' Chaim Yosef Ginsburgh



R' Yossi Ginsburgh is rav of the Chabad community in Ramat Aviv and rosh yeshiva of the mosdos there. Over the years, hundreds of men and women have passed through the yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim and the seminary Pnimitut, with many of them going on to serve as shluchim. The Chabad community in Ramat Aviv is a community where shlichus is constantly being encouraged.

It is hard to describe the most special moment with the Rebbe. Every moment with the Rebbe is special. And as a student from Eretz Yisroel who learned in Oholei Torah in Crown Heights, we had quite a few. But one of the most special and significant moments for me occurred in the following manner.

It was in 5749 and I was learning in Oholei Torah. Every free minute from yeshiva we tried to be in 770, especially when special things were going on.

On 20 Adar, there was a yechidus for friends of Lubavitch. The shluchim brought their wealthy supporters for a special meeting with the Rebbe which was closed to the general public. The Rebbe addressed them, advised them, and blessed them. At the end of the yechidus we knew that the Rebbe would deliver a separate sicha in Gan Eden HaTachton for a group of shluchim who came with their mekuravim. We three bachurim went upstairs to wait for the Rebbe near the elevator.

The Rebbe came upstairs. The shluchim waited for the Rebbe in Gan Eden HaTachton while we stood outside of Gan Eden HaTachton, more or less near the elevator. The door opened and the unexpected happened. The Rebbe turned directly toward us, the three bachurim, and began saying in the tune of a sicha,

"Shliach oseh shliach, biz Meia shluchim" (One shliach makes another shliach, up to a hundred shluchim).

It took a few seconds and the secretary R' Leibel Groner immediately said to the Rebbe, "These are talmidim," and motioned toward the waiting shluchim. The Rebbe made a sign of surprise with his hand and turned around toward the group of shluchim and began saying the sicha again.

We were in shock. We stood there like gawkers. We hadn't thought the Rebbe would turn toward us. The entire event was a heavenly experience since we were 16-17 year old bachurim and opposite us was a respectable group of shluchim and you couldn't mix us up.

For us it was a sort of yechidus with a clear instruction. This is what accompanies me till today – a shliach makes a shliach, up to a hundred shluchim.

THE BILLION DOLLAR DEAL THAT FELL THROUGH

R' Yirmiyahu Kalifa



R' Yirmiyahu Kalifa is the dean of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Beer Sheva. He was a successful businessman who lived in New York for many years.

Right after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, a representative from the United Arab Emirates in the Persian Gulf approached me through a mutual friend. They were quite nervous that they would be the Iraqi dictator's next destination and they knew he felt no compunction about using unconventional and cruel means of warfare.

Fear throughout the region of chemical and biological warfare created a huge demand for gas masks. Warehouses emptied out and factories that made the masks operated around the clock to meet the demand. The representative told me that the biggest gas mask factory in the world was in Germany but they were working on a large order for Saudi Arabia and could not supply masks for the UAE, which is why he wanted my help.

At that time, doing business with China was still in its infancy, but I had good connections there, which I used to find a factory that would manufacture gas masks of a standard not lower than the German factory. We showed the mask to the sheik who gave his approval and we began to close the deal.

The deal was worked out down to the last details, the lawyers went over and over the contracts, and we came

“At that moment I realized that he wasn't just another rabbi as I had met before, and I knew that it made no difference what he would or wouldn't answer, because I wanted to bond with him and receive his guidance for my life.”

to agreements on every minor detail. The deal was very worthwhile for us. The rich Gulf states were deathly afraid and were willing to pay anything for the masks which were unobtainable anywhere else in the world with the quality and in the quantity and in the time frame they wanted. At the time, I was working with my partner, a Jew from Florida, and we were expecting to earn nearly a billion dollars for the two of us in a deal that had no risks and which was already hermetically sealed.

We were supposed to sign on it early in the morning and right after that were supposed to send the first bank transfer for a large part of the money.

I did not want to bother the Rebbe with matters that were up in the air and waited until the last minute to ask for his bracha for the deal. That morning I went to the secretaries and before the Rebbe came out for davening I submitted a letter with R' Leibel Groner. I laid out the entire deal, the expected profit, and wrote all the good resolutions I was taking on so that there would be a bracha and the deal would work out properly.

A few minutes after the Rebbe came back up from davening, they told me that R' Groner was looking for me. I went upstairs and R' Groner told me the Rebbe's response was, “This is not for you at all.”

I called my partner and told him I was out. He asked me, did you lose your mind? I told him that the Rebbe did not give his approval. He thought I had really gone crazy. What did a Rebbe know about business? I repeated my position and said that if he wanted to continue he was welcome to do so and I would connect him with the factory in China, but I had no plans of earning even a single dollar from this deal. If he wanted, he could donate from his profits to the Chabad mosdos in Beer Sheva.

All my friends in the business world thought I had lost it, but I went back to work and stopped thinking about it. A week later, my former partner called me in tears and told me that at the last minute the Germans said they could supply the equipment to the UAE and the entire deal fell through.

That partner, who over many years of friendship

refused to put mezuzos on his house and office, called me after he recovered and asked me to send someone to put up mezuzos. He then committed to making Kiddush on Shabbos and began putting t'fillin on every day. After a while he went to 770 for the first time and saw the Rebbe.

THE REBBE PULLED ME OUT OF RETIREMENT

R' Gershon Ber Schiff



R' Gershon Ber Schiff, who founded and ran the Yeshivas HaBucharim, Ohr Simcha in Kfar Chabad for decades, relates the following:

In the early years of the mosad we did not have any buildings. We started with a few dozen kids and after a few years we had over a hundred, but we still did not have a single building that could serve as a dormitory. The children were dispersed in private homes with families. Each family had two or three boys. Every morning we had to go around and pick up the children and bring them to school and then bring them back again.

The situation was impossible, as far as I was concerned. In many cases the children were very young or had problematic behavior issues and I felt I was losing control over them. I tried to find some solutions but each time it did not work out for one reason or another, and the situation got worse until it was no longer possible to go on that way.

At that time, Beis Rivka was based in the entire area where today there is the Talmud Torah in Kfar Chabad and the Yeshivas HaBucharim. They were about to finish building the campus in Kfar Chabad Beis and I was promised that the minute they moved to their new location, I would get the buildings for a dorm and a dining room for our mosad.

This promise gave me hope and I continued to fight with strength I did not have so that the school should hang on until the buildings were emptied.

The long-awaited day arrived and I went in the morning to bring the children in and I found children from Kfar Chabad there. Apparently, despite the promises, the buildings had been given to another mosad. I broke. I had no dining room, I had no classrooms, I had no dormitory; it was just impossible and unrealistic to continue to maintain an institution for children under these conditions.

I decided that I could no longer continue working like this and went to R' Mendel Futerfas who had been

consistently involved in the development of the school and was constantly demanding that I take in more and more children, and together we went to R' Simcha Gorodetzky. I told them that I cannot maintain a mosad like this and said that I quit.

They discussed it and then told me, "The Rebbe asked you to start this mosad, you accepted the children, and now if you throw them out they will go to irreligious schools. Both R' Mendel and I are too old to run it, so if the Rebbe asked you, then write to the Rebbe that you resign."

I wrote a long letter to the Rebbe in which I detailed all the problems and ended with my not being able to continue under these conditions and that I wanted to leave. I sent the letter with a friend who was going to the Rebbe that day.

A few days later, I went to sleep and there I was, in 770 in the big zal. The Rebbe came in for davening, the path opened and I was standing in the front row. I waited and saw the Rebbe looking in my direction. I turned my head and said to myself, okay, now the Rebbe is going to approach and ask me: What happened to you? Why did you resign? I lowered my head and tried to avoid the Rebbe's gaze but the Rebbe came right over to me.

I began to sweat and felt my heart pounding. I was afraid that the Rebbe would censure me in front of everyone and ask me how was it that in Russia you had a secret underground mikva in your home, a shul, and a class of eight students which you managed with mesirus nefesh while here you have fewer difficulties and you want to leave?!

In the meantime, while I was thinking of how ashamed I would feel in front of everyone, the Rebbe came over and took my right hand and drew me after him to the bima. The Rebbe placed me in the row closest to the bima, let go of my hand, and went to the steps.

The moment the Rebbe dropped my hand I woke up.

The first thing I asked myself was what happened here. I still felt the warmth of the Rebbe's grip on my right hand. It was palpable. I told myself that it could not have been a dream. I felt that the Rebbe had tossed me an atom bomb of energy.

Early in the morning I traveled to the Kfar. I called together R' Simcha, R' Mendel and R' Shloimke Maidanchek and told them that I was taking back my resignation and was going to invest all my energy into building buildings for the yeshiva.

That day I wrote the Rebbe another long letter in which I let him know I was staying, and I wrote that I wanted to build a building for the yeshiva and R'

Shloimke said I needed to build two buildings.

The Rebbe made a line under the name Shlomo and an arrow to the words "two buildings."

From that moment, things began to move quickly. A short time later, a contractor appeared who told me, "I'm ready to build for you and you'll pay me when you can." Construction went into high gear. We built one building and then a huge dining room and then a second building as the Rebbe said, and then even a third building.

ONE AMONG THOUSANDS

R' Yosef Karaskik



R' Karasik is the rav of Bat Chefer and the yishuvim of Emek Chefer. In this role, he impacts positively on an entire region. He is the author of *HaShabbos B'Kabbala u'b'Chassidus* and *G'vura Yehudis b'Malchus HaResha*. He is a columnist for *Beis Moshiach* for many years now.

The sweetest moments that are engraved in my heart forever are the Rebbe's farbrengens which I had the privilege of attending, hearing, understanding, and even remembering.

I had no personal, private moments with the Rebbe; even the yechiduyos which I had were not personal but were general brachos, when I was a bachur and young married man. In general, I have in me a tremendous fear of his holy countenance; an awe and fear mixed with love with which I was raised. This is the reason why I never turned to or addressed the Rebbe.

Even those exalted moments on Erev Pesach after chatzos (noontime) when my friends Yoske Meizlich and Chuna Perman and I would place the package of matzos mitzva we bachurim had baked for the Rebbe in the holy of holies (the Rebbe's room), I would go in with trepidation before the king who sat in his royal chamber, immersed in Rambam, hovering in the higher realms and not this lowly world.

One of the things which accompany me throughout life and which had the greatest impact on shaping who I am was the farbrengens. It is hard to describe the lofty delight, the inner flow of energy that I had at farbrengens. I concentrated, I listened, and I felt an indescribable lofty elevation. To me, a farbrengen of the Rebbe is the highest level of Gan Eden. It was at the farbrengens that took place with hundreds and thousands of people that I felt an absolute connection to the Rebbe (the yechida of my neshama).

“There is no such thing as an ordinary farbrengen, an ordinary sicha. All the Rebbe’s holy words are eternal ideas, a message and chizuk for life, a construct for the soul.”

The heavy crowding, the pushing, and the physical pressure that were sometimes hard to bear vanished and were not felt from the moment the Rebbe walked in to the farbrengen. During those hours it was like I hovered up above.

I once heard from one of the great Chassidim a categorization of a farbrengen of the Rebbe that was on the mark. He said, “Although farbrengens are held in front of numerous people, the Rebbe pierces and looks into the depths of the neshama of each of the Chassidim and he energizes us through our neshamos.” I felt that myself.

During the years that I learned in 770, my days revolved around farbrengens, preparing for farbrengens, the reviews afterward, and so on. I was a minor participant in the review on Motzaei Shabbos of the Shabbos farbrengens, which I remembered not because I am gifted with a special memory but because I so enjoyed it and thirstily took in what the Rebbe said. To me, every word was a sparkling diamond so they were engraved in my mind and soul.

I always yearned for and looked forward to farbrengens. I lived from farbrengen to farbrengen. A weekday when there was a farbrengen was a yom tov for

me. A sudden announcement about a farbrengen got my adrenaline racing. Similarly, the disappointment was tremendous on the occasions when I did not manage to hear and understand what the Rebbe said.

Every farbrengen and sicha was an entire world. There is no such thing as an ordinary farbrengen, an ordinary sicha. All the Rebbe’s holy words are eternal ideas, a message and chizuk for life, a construct for the soul. From one verse and statement of the Sages the Rebbe taught a message that extends to every area of life. Every small line in Rashi turned, with the Rebbe’s teachings, into a foundation in the service of G-d. There is no happenstance; everything is intentional and precise from Heaven in Divine Providence. Also, when the Rebbe explained a broader issue or a specific topic in Torah, ultimately it boiled down to, “I was not created except to serve my Maker,” a lesson in avodas Hashem.

My Rebbe is not only the Rosh B’nei Yisroel, Moshiach Hashem, but also my personal teacher. The farbrengens, the mode of speech, the style, the turns of phrase, the approach to Torah and the world, are my guiding lights in life. They are my personal guides. Everything I have today in my work in rabbanus and shlichus as well as family life is from those elevated, holy moments with the Rebbe at farbrengens.

After 3 Tammuz, my love and longing for the Rebbe have grown. While I was in 770, the motif of love was hidden beneath the awe and fear in honor of the king.

If from heaven they brought us down to this generation, then we must get busy and spread the light of the Rebbe’s teachings, the light of Judaism in the world, in order to bring the Sh’china down to earth and lead all of existence to the true and complete Geula.

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WHY IS THE KING A CRITICAL ASPECT OF THE MITZVA OF HAKHEL?

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon



Dear Reader sh'yichyeh

This Shabbos - Parshas Bo - is the Shabbos before Yud Shvat. While there are many special things that happened on Yud Shvat (histalkus of Rebbetzin Rivka, histalkus of the Friedlike Rebbe, and the Kabbalas HaNesius of the Rebbe), our main focus needs to be on our connection with the Nasi - the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach - today in 5776.

In the Sichah of Parshas Bo 5748 - a year of Hakhel - the Rebbe explains that in order to strengthen our connection to our king, we must first define the general role of the Jewish king.

Describing the character of the Jewish monarchy, the Rambam (*Hilchos Melachim* 3:6) writes: The king is the **heart** of the Jewish people. The simile of the Jewish king to the heart is that just as the body gets its life-support from the heart, so too the life of the Jewish people comes through their connection to the king.

Yet, there is an obvious question: Why is the king compared to the heart of the Jewish people and not the brain/head of the Jewish people? Does the king not direct and guide the Jewish people just as the brain directs the life source and commands each individual organ of the body?

The Rebbe (in chapter two of the above-mentioned sichah) explains: There is a distinct difference between the connection that each organ has to the brain and the connection each organ has to the heart. With regard to the brain, each organ receives from it its individual and distinct life-function. The eye receives the power to see while the ear receives the power to hear etc. This is in contradistinction to the heart which distributes its very own essence - the blood - to all parts of the body. Every organ is infused with the same essence from the heart.

Now we can understand why the king is compared mainly to the heart - as opposed to the head: For, while it is true that the king directs and leads the Jewish people in all aspects of their lives, the main concept of the king is to give over his essence and reveal the essence of each Jew. Just as the heart gives the blood - the essence of the heart - to each organ, so too the king gives his essence - which is his connection to Hashem - over to each Jew (from old to young, man or woman) with the objective being to reveal the essence of each Jew.

The Mitzva that brings this out the most is the Mitzva of Hakhel. The Rambam defines the Mitzva (*Hilchos Chagiga* 3:1) as: It is a positive commandment to gather together the entire Jewish

people - men, women, and children - after every Sabbatical year when they ascend for the pilgrimage holiday and to read so that they hear passages from the Torah that encourage them to perform mitzvos and strengthen them in the true faith, as D'varim 31:10-12 states: "At the end of a seven-year period, at the time of the Sabbatical year on the Sukkos holiday when all Israel come to appear... gather the nation, the men, the women, the children, and your stranger in your gates..."

The Mitzva of Hakhel is for the king - as the Shliach of Hashem - to give over the words of Hashem to the soul of every single Jew. This mitzva includes men, women and children. It did not matter the level of understanding, affiliation or commitment. Every Jew receives the essence of the king that connects to his very essence.

This also explains why the Nasi of each generation is the Moshiach of that generation. In the words of the Rebbe (Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B' Bavel):

Rabbeinu, the Nasi HaDor, is also the Moshiach of the generation, like Moshe (the first Nasi) of whom it is taught, "The first redeemer is the final redeemer." This accords with the well-known teaching that in every

Continued on page 27

Clandestine Encounters

Between The Frierdiker Rebbe and the Joint

*In the summer 1929 the Frierdiker Rebbe embarked from Europe to Israel and then to the United States of America for the purpose of **fundraising** for the Jews in Russia * During the month of Elul 5689 and Tishrei 5690 (1929) the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rashag **met twice** with representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) * In a series of **documents and letters** never published before, we present a **short report** on the first meeting **from the point of view of the Frierdiker Rebbe**, and a **detailed report** on the second meeting, **from the point of view of the JDC officers** * Before the second meeting, the JDC prepared a “**Secret Memorandum**” which describes at length the **work of the Frierdiker Rebbe in Russia**, even after he left Russia, and the **ingenuity of the Frierdiker Rebbe in financial matters**, which resulted that every dollar received from the JDC **doubled or tripled in value** * These meetings were done under a veil of secrecy, and the “**Secret Memorandum**” emphasized: “It is possible for us to carry on this work **only on condition that no publicity and no noise and no brass band is made of it**” * **Exclusive***

Pirsum Rishon: An Excerpt from a letter penned by the Frierdiker Rebbe to his wife in which he describes his preparation for the second meeting

In the summer of 1929, the Frierdiker Rebbe embarked from Europe to Israel and then to the United States of America for the purpose of fundraising for

the Jews in Russia. The trip was done together with his son-in-law, the Rashag, and took place from summer 1929 to summer 1930. Upon his arrival in the USA, the Frierdiker Rebbe met

with Rabbinical organizations and philanthropists to secure funding for the Jews in Russia, and specifically for their religious needs.

Details of this trip have been



presented in the book "Toldos Chabad B'Artzos HaBris," the preface to Igros Kodesh Volume 2, Sefer HaSichos 5688-5691, and throughout the years in this magazine.

However, in all the accounts of this year-long trip there is no mention of a clandestine meeting that took place during Aseres Yemei Teshuva 5690 (1929) between the Friediker Rebbe and

the Rashag representing Chabad, and two Frum representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC): Mr. Peter (Peretz) Wiernik, the head of the Central Relief Committee, and

Dr. Cyrus Adler, a member of the directorate of the JDC.

The following article will include a description of this meeting, along with the background information pertaining to this meeting, which is found in the JDC Archives (which were digitized and uploaded online, thanks to a grant from Dr. Georgette Bennett and Dr. Leonard Polonsky CBE).

The rest of the documents regarding the Frierdiker Rebbe's extensive involvement with the JDC on behalf of Russian Jewry, which spanned over a decade, will be presented in a separate series in the near future.

**The Rashag to Dr. Adler:
"IT IS OUR DESIRE THAT
CONFERENCE SHALL BEAR
A STRICTLY PRIVATE
CHARACTER"**

On September 21, 1929 (22 Elul 5688), the Rashag sent a letter to Dr. Cyrus Adler, requesting that the first meeting between the Frierdiker Rebbe and the JDC officers shall take place in Dr. Adler's home, and should be of a "strictly private character":

My dear Dr. Adler:

Mr. Hyman of the Joint Distribution Committee informed me of his conversation with you regarding a conference with Rabbi J.I. Schneersohn, scheduled for coming Thursday at 2:30 o'clock in the afternoon.

While we agreed upon the hour, we are undecided about a place. It is our desire that conference shall bear a strictly private character. If it be possible therefore for you to arrange to meet us at your residence in New York, it would be very pleasing. However, if unable, we would kindly request

you to please suggest an address for same date.

Accept kindest regards and best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Awaiting your reply, I am,
Sincerely yours,

Samarius Gourary

**The Frierdiker Rebbe
on Dr. Adler:
"YOU CAN FIND IN HIM
THE JEWISH PULSE"**

An excerpt from a letter penned by the Frierdiker Rebbe to his wife (Tishrei 4, 5690), published here for the first time, describing the first meeting with the JDC officers, and the deep effect he had on Dr. Cyrus Adler and Mr. Peretz Wernick, and his hopes for a successful second meeting (Translated from Yiddish):

Tuesday, Tishrei 4, 5690

People say that Peretz Wernick, the editor of the *Morgen Journal* newspaper, became my *Chossid*. The devotion and respect that he gives me – is visible to everyone. And thank G-d, the same thing is with all those visited me until now.

After an hour's conversation, everyone left satisfied. Yesterday, he [Peretz Wernick] told my son-in-law Rabbi Shmaryahu [Gourary], that Professor Cyrus Adler told him I made a very good impression on him.

Last week, on the Thursday before Rosh Hashana, I met him [Peretz Wernick], together with [Professor] Adler, for a half an hour, in a separate office in the JDC. I spoke only in Yiddish, but with hearty points. We agreed to meet, G-d willing,

tomorrow. The time is set for 1:30 to 3:00. He is very serious, with a scholarly face, and you can find in him the Jewish pulse, the Jewish vein.

May G-d have mercy on me, and give me unusual success (above nature) in everything – both the community issues, and for us personally. There are great hindrances. Mr. Rosen said we will receive 50 thousand dollars for the future, but I want 150. May G-d have mercy.

**The Frierdiker Rebbe on the
JDC Proposal:
"OFFERING HALF A
PENNY TO A LARGE
STARVING FAMILY"**

The description of the second meeting, from the point of view of Dr. Cyrus Adler (JDC):

Memorandum of interview had with Rabbi [Yosef Yitzchak] Schneerson and his secretary, Rabbi [Shmaryahu] Gourary, by Dr. [Cyrus] Adler and Mr. [Peter] Wiernik on Wednesday afternoon, October 9, 1929 [Tishrei 5, 5690]"

These gentlemen stated that there were five subjects which they want to present to us concerning the religious life in Russia: Shechita, Sabbath, Mikvas, Education and Rabbis. They spent most of their time, however, talking on the subject of education.

I asked them what was the point about Shechita, – whether they lacked Shochtim or whether it was prohibited. They said that they neither lacked Shochtim nor was it prohibited; that they were not permitted to get the animals to kill. I told them that I had not heard of this, – that many of the

people had lived without beef for a good many years. That if they had cows [=milk] and vegetables, these people could live.

They stated that the Mikvas were perfectly legal. In fact, most of them had been destroyed during the war and they had no funds to rebuild them.

The rabbis, they said, were in a deplorable condition. The communities lacked income to pay them. They could not collect enough money and moreover the meat tax, which had been the principal support of the Kehillas was lost through the lack of the ability of the Shochtim to kill the cattle. They also said that the rabbis were put in a class in which they were required to pay the highest rent for their rooms and in some cases forced to pay as much as five times the amount the laboring man paid for the same rooms. That altogether their condition was most deplorable and a large sum of money was required for their support. They submitted the attached memorandum.

They then spoke of the next three months. They said that Dr. Rosen had told them that he could let them have Roubles 10,000 in the next few months. Rabbi Schneerson said that this is like offering half a penny to a large starving family.

They presented further a budget for religious work for the next year (1930), which totalled \$1,000,000. They asked that the Joint Distribution Committee, through its Russian appropriations, supply this amount up to 30%, or \$300,000.

They then pointed out some perfectly legal ways in which

Joint Distribution Committee money could be used for the support of religious needs. Kosher kitchens, they said, were perfectly legal and cheap kosher kitchens could be set up throughout the country.

Rabbi Gourary said that he would furnish me with the exact wording in the Russian text of just what was needed and what was not, and I asked him, with the help of Mr. Wiernik, to send me a translation. In addition, I should like to have a photostatic copy of the code text.

Based upon a memorandum handed me by Mr. Hyman [see below], which was prepared by R, I translated to them what he said was the situation there, which they admitted in the main to be correct. They stated, however, that it was highly necessary from their point of view that funds for the rabbis or for cultural work should continue to go through Dr. Rosen, for whom they had nothing but the highest praise.

They then asked me if I would give them my moral support in their endeavor to secure funds. They understand perfectly that there is to be no publicity and no meetings. They were willing to interview individuals and asked for my support in visiting these Individuals.

They pointed out that through the material and also the moral support of the \$10,000 which Dr. Kahn allotted for Matzohs last spring, Dr. Hildesheimer and the other Jews had been able to get \$90,000 abroad. They said particularly that momentary help is most urgent and that the rabbis must be helped at once.

Towards the end of the report, reference is made to the



“Matzoh campaign” of 1929, which was a campaign directed by the Frieddiker Rebbe to secure Matzohs for Russian Jewry, starting in 1929 and continuing throughout the 1930’s. Files pertaining to this campaign will be presented in the future.

“THE AUTHORITIES WHO ARE MERELY WINKING AT THE THING FOR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS...”

This report mentions a memorandum prepared by Mr. Hyman. This “Confidential memorandum” was prepared two days before the meeting, on October 7, 1929 (Tishrei 3, 5690) by Mr. Joseph Hyman, the secretary of the JDC, discussing the work of the “our Friend” (the Frieddiker Rebbe), “Mr. R” (probably Dr. Rosen, head of the JDC in Russia) and the “Rabbinical Committee” (the organization founded by the Frieddiker Rebbe in Russia, which continued managing the Chabad activities in Russia):

“Confidential Memorandum”

From: J.C. Hyman

To: Dr. Cyrus Adler

In connection with your interview on Wednesday, I think you ought to bear in mind the following facts concerning the situation in Russia:

1. Under the Russian regulations, there is no legal impediment to worship on the part of Jews or any other creed, -- whether this be in large synagogue atmosphere or in small minyanim.

2. The confiscation or seizure by the authorities of synagogue or ecclesiastical buildings is generally done on the following theories:

a. That the buildings which constitute technically the property of the local municipalities are falling into disrepair, or

b. That the buildings are not fully or adequately used for the purposes for which they are available and consequently should be applied to the other municipal or communal functions, or

c. At the request of local groups of Jewish workmen or members of labor unions, etc. who claim that they have a much better right to the use of the buildings which they will utilise fully for club, literary and other purposes, than those who want the buildings for religious observance which, in the main, are attended by a very small group of congregants.

Dr. Rosen states to me that during the last year, let us say from October 1928 to the present time, he is not aware of any increased percentage of confiscation of Jewish buildings out of proportion to the taking over of other religious edifices. In fact, more churches have been confiscated and razed to the ground than has been true

in the case of synagogues...

So far as religious instruction is concerned, the regulation is that a class may be conducted to consist of no more than three persons under the age of 18. There is no objection to a teacher conducting as many classes as he desires, providing they do not consist of more than three of these minors under the regulation. Religious instruction is permissible for classes or groups above the age of 18, and there are a number of Yeshivas of these older students now in Russia.

Despite these regulations, there are a number of clandestine Chedorim and Talmud Torahs. These exist in every one of the large cities of Russia and in a majority of the smaller towns. The support of these institutions is derived from local collections and from abroad.

Up to the time that our friend [The Friediker Rebbe] left Russia, he was virtually the moving spirit supervising the collection and distribution of these funds and maintained contact with all of the rabbis and leaders throughout Russia as chairman of the clandestine Rabbinical Committee.

With the expulsion of our friend, he kept in touch with the remainder of the Rabbinical Committee from Riga and he is still in contact with the members of this committee and directing their work, but he is not supplying them with funds. All the funds that the Rabbinical Committee has received from abroad has been given them by R in Russia.

After our friend left Russia, he found the possibility of making arrangements in Riga with some people living in

Russia who had Russian money or remnants of their old fortune which they were anxious to get abroad. There is no chance of exchanging Russian money for dollars or for other foreign currency in Russia and so these people want to send it abroad. These people are ready to give their Roubles away in Russia at a reduced rate provided someone is in a position to pay out a corresponding amount in dollars to them or to their order in any country abroad. Thus our friend was able to get for a dollar more than the regular rate in Roubles; In fact as much as two and three times as many Roubles for a dollar. It is quite possible that at present he gets a better rate as there are a few people who still have considerable amounts of Russian money which they are anxious to get rid of.

These transactions are very good. The chances that he or some others will get into trouble in Russia on account of this are rather small, but at the same time it may happen. Our point of view has been that if some of the rabbis would be arrested or prosecuted by the Government for teaching religion, we would be in a position to interfere in an unofficial way and be helpful to them. If any one of them gets into trouble on account of illegal money exchange, it will be absolutely impossible for us to do anything for them and it would give the government a strong argument for prosecuting them severely.

As a matter of fact, anybody in Russia who is caught making illegal transactions is liable to be exiled to Siberia or other remote sections of the country for a period of from three to five years, or imprisonment and hard labor for the same period.

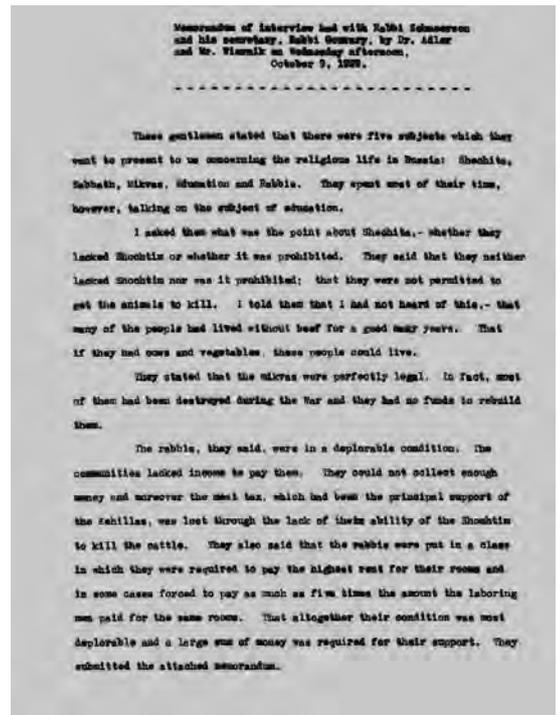
While it is inconvenient for the Agro-Joint to continue to carry on relations with this Rabbinical Committee and supply them with funds from time to time, we can still do it. It is inconvenient for us but it is very convenient for the Rabbinical Committee because if it should ever become necessary, they can say they received the funds from the Agro-Joint. We would like to discontinue this. At the same time, we cannot deny that if this work is to be carried on, it is more convenient for the rabbis to receive funds through the Agro-Joint than from any other source.

It is against the law to have money brought into Russia from abroad except through the bank. If it is found out that they have received money from the

Agro-Joint, there will be no technical crime committed. On the other hand, if it is ever found out that they have received money from other sources outside of the Agro-Joint and the Government bank, not only they but the people for whom they have received the money in Russia are bound to get into difficulty.

It is possible for us to carry on this work only on condition that no publicity and no noise and no brass band is made of it, as the whole thing is undoubtedly known to the authorities today who are merely winking at the thing for other considerations.

We made arrangements to use some of our profits for this religious work and this



amounts to more than the legal rate of exchange.

Continued from page 21

generation "there is a righteous individual who is worthy of being the redeemer, and when the time comes, G-d will be revealed to him and will send him...."

It is logical to assume that this is the Nasi HaDor. Indeed, regarding Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi [known also as Rabbeinu HaKadosh] the Talmud explicitly states: "Rav said, 'If he is among the living, he is Rabbeinu HaKadosh.'" In other words, "If Moshiach is from the ranks of the living, he is certainly Rabbeinu HaKadosh," the Nasi HaDor.

And in footnote 81 the Rebbe connects this aspect - that the Nasi is Moshiach - to the essential bond of the king and the people that we explained above:

Note that a spark of Moshiach exists within each and every Jew. [This resolves an apparent contradiction between two Talmudic

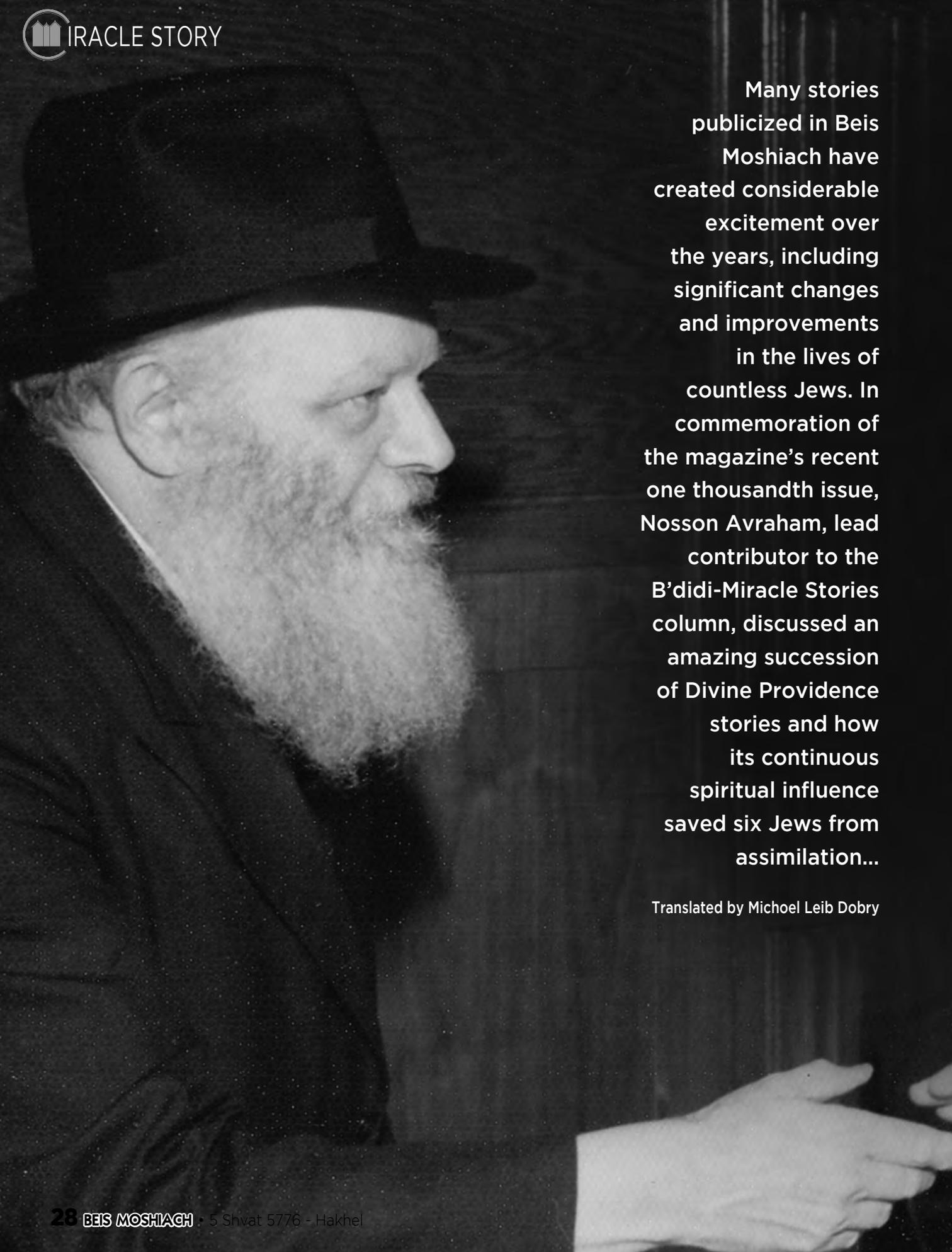
teachings on the words, "A star issued from Yaakov" (Numbers 24:17): According to one teaching this refers to Moshiach (*Talmud Yerushalmi, Taanis* 4:5); according to another it refers to every Jew (*Talmud Yerushalmi, Maaser Sheini*, chapter 4). In light of the above there is no contradiction, for each and every Jew possesses a spark of Moshiach's soul.

Since every Jew possesses a Yechida (the fifth and innermost level of the soul), and every individual Yechida is a spark of the comprehensive Yechida, which is the soul of Moshiach, and since "the Nasi is everything" — i.e., he comprises all the individual sparks of Moshiach, his soul is perforce the comprehensive Yechida; hence, he is the Moshiach of the generation. Jew = Moshiach spark. Moshiach spark = Yechida. Nasi = all Yechidas (all Moshiach sparks). Thus, Nasi HaDor = Moshiach.

From the above is clear that we must use this time before Yud-Shvat to strengthen our connection to our Nasi and Melech - the Rebbe - and to his mission of preparing the world for the revelation of Moshiach.

To quote the HaYom Yom (24 Sivan): You ask how can you be bound to me when I do not know you personally... "The true bond is created by studying Torah. When you study my maamarim, read the sichos and associate with those dear to me - the chassidic community and the T'mimim - in their studies and farbrengens, and you fulfill my request regarding saying T'hilim and observing Torah-study times - in this is the bond.

Rabbi Avtzon is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati and a well sought after speaker and lecturer. Recordings of his in-depth shiurim on Inyanei Geula u'Moshiach can be accessed at <http://www.ylcrecording.com>.



Many stories publicized in Beis Moshiach have created considerable excitement over the years, including significant changes and improvements in the lives of countless Jews. In commemoration of the magazine's recent one thousandth issue, Nosson Avraham, lead contributor to the B'didi-Miracle Stories column, discussed an amazing succession of Divine Providence stories and how its continuous spiritual influence saved six Jews from assimilation...

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

**DOMINO EFFECT:
BEIS
MOSHIACH
MIRACLE
STORIES
RESULT
IN MORE
MIRACLES**



The Rebbe stated on countless occasions the saying, “We are assured by covenant that any wide-ranging effort and labor [in outreach] pursued wisely and with friendship is never fruitless.” During my twelve years working with the *Beis Moshiach* magazine, I have seen the fulfillment of this adage over and over again.

It is no secret that the column I enjoy the most is *B’didi Hava Uvda*, presenting our readers each week with miracle stories of Divine Providence, together with descriptive and thrilling life experiences.

I saw the tremendous influence of the written word for myself with one of the first articles I submitted for publication in the magazine - the fascinating life story of R’ Yotam Klein.

Yotam was born in Kibbutz Geshet, enlisted in an elite IDF unit, and then spent years searching for G-d. Among other things, he participated in an arduous and exhilarating backpacking journey through South America. When I asked him for some pictures to illustrate his experiences, he gave me some photos with him holding real alligators and anacondas. The editors selected one picture for the article showing him with a frightening snake in his hands. As I had hoped, the article made a very positive impression. Many shlichim called Yotam and asked him to deliver a lecture on his life story.

Over the next two years, I wrote many more articles and stories. One night during Tishrei 5766, when I was staying in 770, I was sitting at a farbrengen for bachurim. Among those speaking was a baal t’shuva studying



Nosson Avraham

in Ramat Aviv, and he was telling the story about how his connection to Chabad developed. According to this bachur, the clincher came when he was sitting in one of the Chabad Houses in India during the early stages of his kiruv process, and he was having doubts whether he was doing the right thing. There was an issue of *Beis Moshiach* on the table and he began to leaf through it.

Suddenly, his eyes came across a picture of a typical Israeli tourist holding a giant snake. The photo aroused his curiosity, and he read the accompanying article. It moved him to take action. “If this young man with his unique life story can come close to traditional Judaism after being so far away, then I should be able to follow the same path,” he thought to himself.

I felt a sense of elation as I heard him tell his story. This showed that I played a modest, albeit important, role in his return to Yiddishkeit, in the merit of the article I had publicized in *Beis Moshiach*.

I have since heard countless reactions to my printed articles, particularly the miracle stories.

These stories possess something that touches and arouses the hearts of our fellow Jews.

CHOOSING “THE” STORY

In honor of the one thousandth issue of *Beis Moshiach*, I was asked to write about the spiritual impact from publicizing these stories in the magazine. The truth is that there have been many articles. After almost every *B’didi* column, there has been a wave of telephone calls from people who were very impressed by the story and asked for more details. However, if I had to choose the article that created the most positive revolution among our readers, it would be the story of the Jew who was saved from assimilation that appeared in print toward the end of 5768, and was followed by more and more articles of a similar nature. They represented a direct continuation of the same amazing and miraculous story.

1.

On a Shabbos for yeshiva bachurim that took place that year on Shabbos Parshas BaMidbar, HaTamim **Shneur Zalman Aharon** told the following story:

Last summer, I was on shlichus in Prague, he began. R’ Itzik Gershowitz and his wife also arrived there in preparation for conducting local High Holiday activities sponsored by the Chabad House. R’ Yitzchak (Itzik) led the Rosh Hashanah meals with great skill while integrating Chassidic stories from the past and present. One of the stories he told was uniquely inspiring, primarily due to its exceptional ending:

“Several years ago I was learning in the Chabad yeshiva

in Tzfas,” said R’ Yitzchak Gershowitz as he began his story.” As part of the mitzvaim activities we organized, I would go each Friday to a car dealership in Natzrat Illit, put t’fillin on passers-by and employees, while making certain to reach the owners as well. On one occasion, I walked between the rows of cars for sale, and seeing a Jew standing near one of the cars, I approached him and asked, ‘Have you already put on t’fillin today?’

“Instead of replying, he made a request, ‘Tell me a nice story.’

“No problem,” I said, and I immediately began telling the following story. “One day, a typical Israeli (as per “Israeli tradition”) arrived in Belgium. He had left Eretz Yisroel, traveling all over the globe to earn money, “living it up,” and above all, leaving behind the noisy and hectic life in his native homeland. Now, far away from his parents and teachers, whose answers to his many questions never seemed to satisfy him, he tried to fill the empty void within his soul.

“Regrettably, this young man, whose knowledge of Judaism was minimal, became acquainted with a local Gentile woman and the connection between them grew very strong. After a relationship of three years, the two decided r”l to get married. However, the young man told his girlfriend that since he realized that he was about to take a very significant step in his life, he first wanted to seek the advice of a rabbi. ‘At least I’ll know where I’m heading,’ he explained, and the Gentile woman agreed.

“The young man went to a certain rabbi and discussed his future plans with him. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the rabbi used all the powers of



Rabbi Yitzchak Gershowitz



Rabbi Shabtai Slavatitzki

“ This Jew came up to me after the davening and said, “Today I too am offering a lamb for a sacrifice...” When he saw my look of bewilderment, he began to explain. “I’m offering Cristina today...,” he said in a voice shaking with emotion.

persuasion he could muster to try and dissuade him from carrying out his intentions. He explained to him that throughout their years in exile, the Jewish people had acted with great self-sacrifice for their holiness, doing everything to preserve their unique status. As a result, he urged him not to make such a decision.

“After a lengthy discussion, the young man was convinced and he left his non-Jewish girlfriend.

“However, after just a few days, he reversed his decision and returned to her. Shortly before their scheduled wedding, he again told her that he still wanted to speak with another rabbi. ‘Maybe he won’t see things as seriously,’ he thought to himself.

“The second rabbi also made an intensive effort to convince

the young Jew to change his mind. ‘What will you say to the coming generation?’ he objected. ‘According to traditional Judaism, your future progeny, forever, will be Gentiles.’ He then explained that according to the Christian faith, his children will be Jews, ‘and their lives will become complicated at every turn.’ The rabbi’s words had a strong effect upon the young man, and he agreed to put an end to the relationship.

“However, it turned out that the test was too difficult for him, and before long, he again returned to his Gentile girlfriend.

“Shortly before their wedding, this young Jew decided again to see a rabbi. This time, he was determined that this would be the last meeting of this kind and he would abide by the results, even if it required considerable effort. By Divine

Providence, the young man came this time to the Rebbe's shliach in Belgium, Rabbi Shabtai Slavatitzki, and presented his case. As with the previous two instances, Rabbi Slavatitzki did everything he could to show him what a grievous error he was about to make. After several hours of discussion, the young man remained unyielding in his position. Seeing that his arguments weren't being successful, Rabbi Slavatitzki thought for a few moments, and then said, 'Ask the Rebbe!'

"The young man agreed and traveled to New York. He soon found himself standing in a long and crowded line in front of 770 for dollars distribution. He was filled with tension and anticipation as he slowly moved forward, step by step, preparing to come before the Rebbe. When the moment finally came, he was deeply moved. In a voice choking with emotion, he opened his heart to the Rebbe and asked for his advice. The Rebbe gave him a warm and affectionate look with a broad smile, as if he was the only person in the world.

"I'm jealous of you!' the Rebbe told him. Before the young man could open his mouth, the Rebbe explained what he meant. 'Every Jew is given a test that he can meet. The test is like a ladder by which he can climb to higher levels! I never had such a test. While such a test is definitely hard, it is fitting and important to take advantage of the moment and climb,' the Rebbe said as he concluded his message of encouragement.

"The young man managed to hear the words 'Bracha V'hatzlacha' as he soon found himself outside the building, amazed and perplexed. The whole experience had left a

powerful impression upon him, instilling him with greater strength and fortitude. He felt that the Rebbe had found the words that he needed to hear. A short while later, he made a steadfast decision to leave his girlfriend, once and for all!

"Later, when Rabbi Slavatitzki asked him why it was specifically the Rebbe's words that had led him to make the right decision, he replied, 'The other rabbanim with whom I spoke before coming to the Rebbe had a different style. One spoke with me about the gloried past of the Jewish People, the other spoke about my future children's complications and lack of religious identity. However, the Rebbe focused his words on the present, on the great opportunity that had come my way. This imbued me with the strength I needed to make the right decision.'

"I told this story to the young man standing in the dealership's lot. I failed to notice the profound effect it had upon him. After a few moments of silence, he managed to collect his thoughts and in a quavering voice said:

"Did someone send you here? How did you know to tell me this particular story? This is exactly what's happening with me; this is the very problem facing me now! I can feel the truth in the Rebbe's words because I too am struggling over whether to leave my non-Jewish girlfriend. However, I have now decided to leave her, once and for all, in the merit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe!'

"This Jew's determination stemmed from a deep sense of regret, and he felt certain that he was now doing the right thing. I maintained contact with the young man, and he did leave his Gentile girlfriend. Nearly a year later, he married a Jewish woman

and established a proper Jewish home."

THE STORY THAT CREATED A REVOLUTION

The farbrengen participants sat awestruck by this fascinating story, amazed to discover that there was more to hear. "Our story is not quite over," Shneur Aharon continued:

There was an Israeli Jew in the Prague Chabad House who also wandered to faraway places to run away from his people. Regrettably, he too fell into a relationship with a non-Jewish woman - named Cristina. While we tried several times to convince him to leave her, all our logical explanations were for naught.

Now, in the middle of the Rosh Hashanah evening seuda, as R' Itzik Gershowitz told his story, I looked toward this Jew and saw him deeply immersed in thought.

The next day we read in the Torah about Akeidas Yitzchak, when Avraham Avinu gave his beloved son to be sacrificed in order to fulfill G-d's command. This Jew came up to me after the davening and said, "Today I too am offering a lamb for a sacrifice..." When he saw my look of bewilderment, he began to explain. "I'm offering Cristina today..." he said in a voice shaking with emotion.

2.

The story was publicized in the *Beis Moshiaich* magazine and had a very powerful effect. In fact, three Jews were saved from spiritual assimilation due to this one article. However, an even more amazing reverberation from this story came in the form of another article publicized several years later in *Beis Moshiaich*

from Rabbi **Heschel Greenberg**, the Rebbe MH”M’s shliach in Buffalo. It turns out that the magazine had an important role in continuing this story at the other end of the globe, as Rabbi Greenberg tells:

One of the regular guests at our Chabad House is a young Jewish man named John (not his real name). John has been with us already for twelve years. He frequently davens at the Chabad House and even comes to eat the Shabbos meals at our house. With the passage of time, John became closer and closer to Yiddishkait. He began to observe Shabbos, eat kosher, put on t’fillin each weekday, and more. John’s parents, who were also regular guests in our home, did not object to their son’s spiritual reawakening. However, to my regret, there was one thing that they were stubborn about. John learned in a secular school, and all our efforts to convince them that this was a serious mistake proved unsuccessful.

For his part, John went around his school surroundings with Jewish dignity. He had no problem demonstrating pride in his Judaism against anyone who tried to smash his nose or break his teeth. We couldn’t say that the secular school had a bad influence upon him. At least, that’s what we thought.

One day, the bitter truth became abundantly clear. John had maintained contact for many years with a young woman whom he wanted to marry. There was only one problem: she was a Gentile. Every time I tried to speak with him on this matter, I came to the same sad conclusion. This was a test far too difficult for him. His evasive answers were greater proof than a thousand witnesses. Even John’s mother



Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

“He repeated the same thing, over and over again: ‘I know everything, I’m fully aware of my actions, I even know and understand that I’m making a grave mistake. However, I’m already into it far too deeply and I can’t cut myself off.’”

agreed. She was unwaveringly opposed to having a non-Jewish daughter-in-law, but John was just as stubborn and unyielding.

As we have mentioned, his family were regular guests at our Chabad House. One Shabbos during the meal, I decided to tell them a story I had read that week in *Beis Moshiaich*. I don’t always have time to read the magazine – it usually depends on how early I come home before Shabbos. However, by Divine Providence, I was able to go through it that week. I came across one story in

particular and I decided to tell it during the Shabbos meal.

Thus, I was sitting with a copy of *Beis Moshiaich* on my knees, as I translated this story into English.

John sat spellbound. He looked at me in disbelief. While I imagined that he would be quite moved by this story, I never dreamed that his reaction would be so intense. I didn’t understand why this story I told had managed to stir him so deeply. After a few seconds in shock, John began to speak as his whole body trembled with emotion. “Cristina is my girlfriend’s name...” John mumbled. His mother sat near him and gave me a look of sheer gratitude. She could feel the turmoil of her son’s tortured soul during those moments.

As it turned out, her motherly instinct was right on the mark. That same week, John went to his mother and happily informed her that he had completely broken off from his Gentile girlfriend.

Two years passed, and as with many Chabad Houses throughout the United States, the Chabad House in Buffalo periodically hosts groups for student Shabbatons - special Shabbos programs geared primarily for students. For most of the students, this is a once-a-year opportunity to experience authentic Judaism. Naturally, we do everything to make it as enjoyable for them as possible (so that they will want to come again...). However, our real objective is to connect them to Yiddishkait.

About a month ago, one such group of students came to the Chabad House. They spent a very joyous Shabbos with us, filled with much singing and dancing. The Shabbos meals aroused some very high spirits among

the participants, and thank G-d, they enjoyed themselves tremendously. Each meal was highlighted by words of Torah and stories where I tried to stress the inner meaning of Shabbos.

At one of the meals that Shabbos, I told the story that I had read in the *Beis Moshiach* magazine with my own small addition, the story of John.

A hush fell over the group. It appeared that the young people in attendance identified with the heroes of this story and were very inspired by its happy ending.

At a certain point, one of the female students got up and said, "Rabbi, this is only the second time I've come for a Shabbaton, and yet this is the second time I'm hearing this story. While the first time wasn't with you, this is still a most interesting coincidence."

"First of all," I said to her in reply, "for a Jew, there are no 'coincidences,' rather 'Divine Providence.' Secondly, had you already heard the aftermath of this story before?"

"No," she admitted.

"Nu, so you've left with something else," I concluded with a smile.

The following week I had to be in New York for a simcha. One of my acquaintances came up to me and pointed to a young lady standing in one of the corners of the events hall.

"Do you know her?" my friend asked.

"No," I replied.

"This girl was with you last week for a Shabbaton and because you told some story, and this was exactly..."

"Ah, yes," I said, cutting him off, "I remember now. But what were you starting to say that happened because of this story?"

"This girl left the Gentile boy with whom she had been."

3.

As a result of these stories and the rounds they made, a total of five Jews were saved from the evils of assimilation. However, it turned out that their influence was still there, and this time, by Divine Providence, it took hold of one of my best friends. In my wildest dreams, I never would have imagined that the dénouement of this story would take place so close to me.

Due to the powerful spiritual effect of Rabbi Greenberg's story, we chose to publicize it about a year later.

The main character in the next chapter of this story was one of my close friends (to preserve his anonymity, we'll call him Shimon). He is a young man who had become associated with Chabad and its teachings at a very young age. I became acquainted with him much later, as his connection to Chassidus and the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, grew. He learned in a Chabad Talmud Torah and later even in the mainstream Chabad yeshivos. He was a typical bachur who toed the line and did everything he was supposed to.

I heard from him one evening and we had a kind of confessional talk that continued well into the night, and he confided in me that he had begun a relationship with a young non-Jewish girl. When he told me this, I was left speechless. Here was a situation that I would have never imagined from a graduate of Tomchei T'mimim, especially not with one of my closest friends. This is someone who stringently davened three times a day, learned Chassidus morning and evening, knew well the concept of a Rebbe,

and understood the profound significance of his actions.

My first reaction was a long silence, followed by an equally long stammer: What? How? Why? It was only as we continued talking that I slowly managed to absorb this news. Finally, I succeeded in blurting out a whole sentence: How did you come to this?

It turned out that the story wasn't so complex. He was eating lunch at a restaurant. The waitress was a Gentile. They became acquainted, and the rest was history. At first I hoped that this 'spirit of folly' would pass as quickly as it came, and he would leave the Gentile woman. However, as the days and weeks passed, I was proven wrong. On the contrary, their relationship became even closer.

At a certain point, he even introduced himself to her parents and family at their home in New Jersey. They loved him at first sight. The girl's mother was positively delighted that her daughter had become involved with a Jew, even though he was Orthodox, although she did initially ask him how he could betray his way of life. Nevertheless, she considered it a great achievement that her daughter had found a member of the Chosen People.

My good friend was getting sucked into a spiritual whirlpool. Incredibly, it didn't cause the slightest change in his outward appearance. He continued to walk in the streets with a yarmulke on his head and enwrapped in woolen tzitzis. He put on t'fillin each weekday morning, Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam, davening three times a day. My heart sank as all my efforts to explain to him that he was making a grievous error fell

on deaf ears. We had many long conversations lasting hours at a time. I referred him, discreetly of course, to seek the advice of people who deal with such issues, but nothing seemed to help.

He repeated the same thing, over and over again: "I know everything, I'm fully aware of my actions, I even know and understand that I'm making a grave mistake. However, I'm already into it far too deeply and I can't cut myself off."

Later, there naturally began a spiritual deterioration. This was to be expected. Gradually, he changed his attire and his manner of speaking.

I still had one ray of light left when I thought that there might be an opportunity for him to leave the Gentile woman and realize his mistake with the onset of the High Holiday season. This was a bachur who knew Torah, learned and reviewed Chassidic maamarim, and he davened on Rosh Hashanah in 770. When the huge congregation sang the niggunim of the Rebbeim before T'kias Shofar, he stood close to me and I saw him burst into tears. People near us were puzzled by this reaction, while I was actually quite happy and encouraged.

On Yom Kippur, he woke up early and davened with great solemnity. The day before, during the Kaparos ceremony, he swung the chicken over his head. Our eyes met for a few seconds. He lowered his head and said, "Almighty G-d, You created this world, You give it existence literally out of nothing at every moment, and You know what will happen, what has happened, and what is happening now. Please help me to separate from this Gentile woman as easily as possible."

I now felt relatively certain that he fully realized the situation

and what was at stake. I hoped that the separation would come soon. However, to my great sorrow, the Tishrei holiday season passed and the inner spiritual arousal and reawakening went with it. Like someone under the control of an evil spirit, he went back to his non-Jewish girlfriend, and it appeared as if all was lost.

Around this time, I went on a shlichus mission outside of New York, but I continued to be in touch with him. For the most part, I was praying for him - what more could I do? One day, during a telephone conversation,

currently making the final preparations. We rented an apartment, bought a car, and in another week, we will be there with all our belongings."

This time, I took off the gloves. I had an ethical and Jewish obligation of the highest order to tell him some very unpleasant things. "Don't say that you weren't warned," I said. "You are standing at a crossroads and turning willingly toward a tragically forbidden path. You are not just making yourself miserable; this is something that relates to generations to come. Change your mind; this could

“As he read the story, it turned out that he had the same name as this Jew and the non-Jewish girlfriend in the story had the same name as his girlfriend. The story ended with the Jew deciding to leave his Gentile companion...”

he told me that without his knowledge, his girlfriend and her mother had begun to learn about Judaism in a Reform temple in his honor. I began to cry, but not from excitement. "How the mighty have fallen?" I thought to myself in pain.

Even my growing sense of pessimism in the face of this gloomy situation had not prepared me for what he said in yet another phone call. He said that he and his girlfriend had decided to move together to Florida. I didn't know what to do. How could I possibly slam the brakes on this runaway locomotive leading my good friend into the abyss? I knew that he would realize his error sooner or later, but what price would he pay in the meantime?

He then said, "We are

be your last chance!" I failed. If I thought for a few moments that I had breached his wall of determination, his response proved to me once again that nothing had changed.

Several weeks passed. My extremely busy life removed him from my mind. Periodically, I had thoughts about my friend and where he was in the world, but this soon dissipated with the passage of time.

One night, my telephone rang. It was very late at night and I was getting ready to go to sleep. "Who could be calling me at this hour?" I mused sleepily. I quickly shook myself awake as I heard my friend on the line. His tone of voice was quite different this time.

"I left her two weeks ago," he said. "To be more specific,

I ran away from her.” By this time, there was no question of my falling back asleep, and our conversation lasted until morning. He spoke with great pain about the difficult period he had just gone through, about all the warning signs he had passed along the way, and how he didn’t have the courage to act as he should. The one who finally got a hold of him and put him in his place was, in his words, “the Rebbe himself in all his glory,” just one day before he was scheduled to travel to Florida with his Gentile companion. “I have no other explanation,” he said.

That night, he went to have dinner at one of the kosher restaurants in New York. He was confused and distressed. He understood that he was about to take a step that would determine his whole future and he wanted to relax a bit.

During his meal, seated at a table near him was the Rebbe MH”M’s shliach in Cholon, Rabbi Yerachmiel Gorelick, and several of his friends, including the restaurant’s manager, an Israeli émigré. The two began a lively discussion and Shimon listened to the interesting conversation.

The restaurant manager complained to the shliach: Why do his friends work on Shabbos, make a lot of good money, while he closes his business on Shabbos and earns considerably less than them? Fair question. Rabbi Gorelick listened to his complaint, thought for a moment, and then replied, “I’m jealous of you.” Rabbi Gorelick proceeded to tell his host the abovementioned story about the Jew who was about to marry a non-Jewish woman, and how the Rebbe managed to dissuade the

man by explaining that he was jealous of him because of the test that Heaven was placing before him.

“I’m jealous of you too,” Rabbi Yerachmiel Gorelick said, as he moved to the moral behind this particular story. “If you are given the opportunity to face a trial on observing Shabbos, you apparently have not only the strength to overcome this test, you can also grow and develop as a direct result.”

There are no coincidences in the world, and Shimon knew this as well. He understood that it wasn’t for naught that he had come to this restaurant at exactly this moment to hear Rabbi Gorelick’s story. The message gnawed away at his conscience. Instead of relaxing a little, the heavy weight on his chest merely grew larger and more intense. However, it also seemed that this situation was like a single flash of lightning that would fizzle out in a few minutes. How could things possibly change? While he knew that he was about to do something in complete contrast to his true essence, his conscience, and his faith, he felt that he had lost all self-control.

After he finished his meal, he went down to the subway station. Suddenly, he decided to go to Crown Heights - and to 770, no less. Apparently, there was some inner force pushing him there before he fell headlong into the abyss of klipa.

It’s easy to imagine his lowly spiritual state during that time. His G-dly soul was engaged in a fierce battle with his evil inclination for his very survival. He sat on the subway, totally absorbed in his own thoughts.

At one of the stations, a young Israeli man got on board. This was the last person Shimon

would have wanted to speak with about anything. This fellow liked to chat about his surroundings, the whole world - the main thing was to talk.

Shimon sat in his place and prayed that he would just leave him alone. “I’m just not in the mood to get into a conversation,” he said. However, the Master of the Universe apparently sent this young man on a special mission, and he continued to chatter away with a smile on his lips.

“I know you from somewhere,” the Israeli said gently. “All Jews are brothers,” Shimon replied politely. “It’s a small world.” He hoped that the young man would get the hint. Instead, he paid no attention and kept talking incessantly. He didn’t even wait for Shimon to respond. He first told about the new apartment he had found, the strong Jewish community in the United States, and his work as a deliveryman. Several minutes later, he suddenly stopped his chatter and said, “I have to tell you something.”

Without waiting for a reply, the Israeli began his story. “I may appear to be a traditional Jew and my grandfather was a rabbi in a synagogue. However, up until a few days ago, I had a non-Jewish girlfriend from Puerto Rico. You Lubavitchers saved me. If I would have listened to you earlier, I never would have got into this mess.”

Ignoring Shimon’s changing facial expressions, the Israeli continued his monologue. “I went out with this woman for a whole year. Her parents and family demonstrated great love towards me. They were very happy that their daughter had become acquainted with a Jew and they even bought us a car.

“I was certain that this

connection would only get stronger. However, every time I came to Crown Heights and stayed with friends there, they wasted no effort in explaining to me in the clearest possible terms that a union between a Jew and Gentile is something that cannot produce a happy and normal family life. I didn't know what they wanted from me. I've lived among my people; I always thought that Israeli girls only wanted to take my money away from me. Now there came a Gentile woman who only gave to me without making any requests... Why do they say such things about non-Jews? I liked the way they related to me. I knew that when I would decide to marry her, I would get her to convert just like many others do.

"A few days ago, I was driving our car through Manhattan on some errands. As I was traveling along the city streets, I again asked myself what the Chabadnikim want from me. If I would listen to them, I wouldn't even have a car, as her parents had bought it for both of us. Just fifteen minutes later, I was involved in an automobile accident. While the car was not seriously damaged, I quickly called my Gentile girlfriend's mother to let her know what had happened. When she heard that I had been in an accident, she began to shower me with anti-Semitic curses such as 'dirty Jew,' etc.

"I never would have believed that she would speak to me in such a manner. She had always been so friendly and pleasant to me, but it seems that she was just giving me lip service. I suddenly realized that the Chabadnikim were right!

"Today," the young Israeli continued, "I learned the first

chapter of Tanya with one of the Chabadnikim. The Alter Rebbe writes there about the concept of 'The kindness of the nations is sin.' Indeed it is... That very same day I informed my Gentile girlfriend that I was leaving her. She pleaded and apologized, but I now realized that it was a waste of time. A Jew and a Gentile together in a relationship just won't work. I headed straight to 770, where I started coming on a daily basis..."

The young Israeli finished his story and the train came to a halt. The conductor announced that they had arrived at the Kingston Avenue stop.

Shimon almost couldn't get up from his place. Just two hours earlier in a restaurant he had heard a story about a Jew whom the Rebbe had saved from assimilation, and now he's hearing another amazing anecdote from a strange young man about his own rescue from assimilation, all while he is facing an identical conundrum. The Israeli youth didn't understand why the Chabad bachur sitting near him appeared totally dumbstruck.

Shimon felt that the powers of Heaven were trying to help him in reaching the right decision. "The fact is that I heard today two stories in a row about Jews saved from assimilation. I had never heard or read such stories in my life."

Upon leaving the subway station, the Israeli parted from him, but not before tossing him another insight on life: "These Gentiles, they can show you that they like you, but if the Torah says 'Eisav hates Yaakov,' then that is the actual reality, and I've experienced this for myself. It was only for this reason that I recently got closer to G-d."

RISING FROM THE BOTTOM

Shimon sat for a good long time on one of the benches in front of Beis Chayeinu, trying to recover from this encounter. His life passed before him in his mind like a moving picture. *Am I in a dream from which I will soon awake?* he thought to himself. The buds of a true spiritual awakening began to blossom within him. *It's forbidden for you to do this*, he heard a tiny voice ordering him. *Father in Heaven, please help me get out of this mess.* In his thoughts he saw himself sitting at farbrengens, thirstily drinking the words of the rabbanim and mashpiim.

He recalled his moments of hiskashrus to the Rebbe, the nighttime Krias Shma, and the fact that as a Tamim he never let a morning pass without going to the mikveh. He remembered learning the Rebbe's sichos and maamarim each morning. All these recollections penetrated his being like a sword. He looked at the T'mimim going in and out of 770, saw their gentle and peaceful faces and his heart filled with envy. *What have I come to? How have I reached such a state?* He burst into sobs from the depths of his troubled soul.

It was only some time later that he gathered the strength to go into 770. He soon found himself joining a minyan for Mincha, although his thoughts were somewhere else entirely.

When he finished davening, he sat down on one of the benches in a state of pensiveness. Suddenly, he noticed a copy of *Beis Moshiach* lying on a nearby table and began to look through it in an almost absent-minded manner. He recalled with a sad sense of nostalgia how he would wait in yeshiva for the magazine to come out every Wednesday

and read all the articles, including the *Chassidim Ein Mishpacha* column. He smiled bitterly as he thought where they would write his name when he married his non-Jewish girlfriend...

He was quickly turning the pages, when his eyes picked up the word ‘assimilation.’ He went back to that page and saw a story told by Rabbi Heschel Greenberg, the Rebbe’s shliach in Buffalo, about how the Rebbe saved a Jew from assimilation. As he read the story, it turned out that he had the same name as this Jew and the non-Jewish girlfriend in the story had the same name as his girlfriend. The story ended with the Jew deciding to leave his Gentile companion...

Shimon was shocked. This was the third message he had received that day - a sharp and clear message.

Tears rolled down his cheeks for a long while and he didn’t try to stop them. A number of bachurim were sitting and learning near him and they looked at him in puzzlement. They tried to find out if he needed help with something, but he gently

rejected them. *I’ve already got my help and these tears are the result*, he thought to himself.

He didn’t waste much time. He got up from his place, traveled to his apartment, and brought all his things to 770. He then bought an airline ticket for a flight out of New York scheduled for the next day. In the meantime, he destroyed his mobile phones to prevent the woman from having any way to contact him.

“My heart pounded uncontrollably,” my friend Shimon said as he recalled the chain of events in that telephone conversation lasting until the following morning. “Since leaving everything behind I entered yeshiva where I learn from morning until night. During my free time I do mitvtzaim with other Jews. G-d saved me!”

FORTUNATE ARE WE, HOW GOOD IS OUR PORTION

Indeed, “any wide-ranging effort and labor [in outreach] pursued wisely and with friendship is never fruitless.”

Three stories publicized in *Beis Moshiach* - six Jews saved from assimilation among the nations of the world.

These are only a few stories among many I have encountered during my years of writing for the magazine.

Here’s another example: During this past year, I interviewed Rabbi Dr. Bar-Ami, who was privileged to have the Rebbe give him a spiritual segula for childbirth. Since then, I have been flooded with calls from people who wanted to contact him, for who knew if there would be another appointed time? Dozens of sweet little Jewish children were born and happy Chassidic families were established in the merit of publicizing this story in *Beis Moshiach*...

Fortunate are we, how good is our portion that this is our shlichus and objective in *Beis Moshiach* - to publicize the words of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, his path, and his teachings to spread the announcement of the Redemption.

Continued from page 44

this and when the man took off the t’fillin he came over and asked: How come when I asked you to put on t’fillin, you said no, but when they asked you, you said yes?

The man said: Since you’re asking, I’ll tell you. When you asked me whether I want to put on t’fillin, I felt that the reason that you want me to put on t’fillin is so that you would have another point to your credit on your way to Gan Eden. But when they asked me, I felt they wanted me to have a bigger Gan Eden.

Oftentimes, we go on mitvtzaim because we are Chassidim of the Rebbe and we want another point.

We want to write to the Rebbe that we put t’fillin on with five people, with another ten, and that’s a good thing. But don’t forget the other person. Every Chassid should care that the other person have a mezuzah, that another person put on t’fillin. It’s not about you.

Certainly, going on mitvtzaim affects hiskashrus, but you need to care about the other person, to love him and be concerned for his welfare.

THE REBBE IS WITH US!

L’Chaim! L’Chaim! May we merit to increase mitvtzaim. Fortunate are we and how good is our portion and

how pleasant our lot.

If the Rebbe asks with a soul request, when we go on mitvtzaim we are fulfilling the Rebbe’s soul request. Does anyone have any doubt that the Rebbe will repay us with children, life, and a livelihood – and all ample? Who doesn’t need blessings in visible, revealed goodness?

The Rebbe is with us and he finds ways to elevate us, to get us to move forward, but we, all of us, need to do our part and show the Rebbe that we are also with him.

May we soon, now, merit, together with the Rebbe, to go to Yerushalayim and build the third Beis HaMikdash.



Build First, Ask Later

Last week we presented the discussions of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) whether there is a need for Chabad activities in Morocco - *This week we present the “back room” discussions of the JDC offices in Europe and Morocco regarding the Chabad activities in Morocco which began without JDC support and then requested their support... * Part Two*

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OFFICE FOR MOROCCO
 No. 6551

12 March 1951

To : A.J.D.C., Paris - Education Department
 attention Mr. Judah Shapiro

From : A.J.D.C., Casablanca

This is a preliminary report on the visit of Rabbi Gorodetzki. You will recall that I mentioned to you that sometime ago his organization sent here Rabbi Lipster who established a Yeshiva in Meknes with 65 students, all of whom eat in their canteen and 30 of whom are interns (sleeping and eating there). The budget of this Yeshiva is about 100,000 francs, of which 50,000 for salaries, 50,000 for food and lodging for rent and other expenses.

They have another so called Yeshiva in Midelt with 60 students, where the salaries alone amount to 20,000 francs.

Mr. Gorodetzki showed me a statement of their expenditures in Morocco in accordance with which they spent here during the period of May-December 1950 1,500,000 francs and during January-March 1951 210,000 francs.

He told me of his conversations with Mr. Shalom and his intention to send here 2 rabbis, but Mr. Shalom declining to pay the salaries of these rabbis, they themselves decided to develop Chabad in Morocco, it's over the wish of the late Rabbi Schneerson. Therefore he sought to find 2 more rabbis, 2 for Meknes and 2 for Midelt. He had the intention to develop their activities in the small towns and of all endeavor to teach and develop the people and Shochetim. He estimated that for this purpose a million monthly would be needed for this purpose.

He came to me to discuss this matter and referring to the continuous close cooperation with JDC asked that we should appropriate a certain sum for their past and current expenditures.

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OFFICE FOR MOROCCO
 No. 6552

15 March 1951

To : Mr. Judah Shapiro - Education Dept.
 attention Mr. Binyomin Gorodetzki

From : A.J.D.C., Casablanca

I thank you for your interesting letter of 10th which concerns with wise no. 0000 of March 10th.

Today I had again a conversation with Rabbi Gorodetzki. He came to talk to me about Yeshivas. In the course of the conversation he told me that it would be wise if some of our agents create agreements between JDC and the Lubavitcher who are working so much hard in hand and that he would be glad to see you and Grand Rabbi Bensusan who welcomed their teaching activities in Morocco. In the course of the conversation he spoke about "JDC needs them and they need JDC".

After a long conversation (you are of course informed that I know the Lubavitcher since 20 years or so and in France as well as in Poland I was in close contact with them) he asked the following: "The JDC would not be interested in their success in Morocco. They figure upon a budget of 1/2 million francs monthly but they do not expect to get more than 1/2 million francs monthly; they will derive part of it from other sources. He expressed his hope that the Committee will show an interest in them and told me that in effect the quantity is about 70,000 francs of the result of the various funds. He further asked that we should include the Yeshiva in Meknes in our scheme of 1951 distribution.

I told Rabbi Gorodetzki that JDC has several great centers for religious activities and Yeshivas, but in order to be successful we should be to take an active part in the teaching, not under our own auspices, should they have the money, but under our auspices which are available. I told him also that we have reasonable doubts that the Yeshiva will be successful to contribute through their students. I further told him the last work on which could render sure is to send him to teach an agreement with your Yeshiva and that their Yeshiva should also be included in the educational program of the new Yeshiva. The solution of

In Morocco, the Chabad plan was to create the institutions and present the JDC with *fait accompli*, functioning Mosdos, and then asking the JDC to sponsor part of the expenses. During the first years of Shlichus in Morocco, the local JDC directors struggled with the quick growth and expansion of Chabad across the country, and complained to the JDC headquarters about it.

This week we present communication between the JDC offices which describe the extent of the Chabad activities in Morocco, a mere nine months after the first Shlichah arrived, and the discussions whether to support the Chabad work in Morocco or not. These documents are preserved in the JDC Archives (digitized and uploaded online, thanks to a grant from Dr. Georgette Bennett and Dr. Leonard Polonsky CBE).

On March 12th, 1951, Mr. William Bein (JDC – Morocco) sent a “preliminary report” on the activities of Chabad in Morocco, and Rabbi Gorodetzki’s request for JDC sponsorship of the program, to Mr. Judah Shapiro (JDC – Paris):

This is a preliminary report on the visit of Rabbi Gorodetzki. You will recall that I mentioned to you that sometime ago his organization sent here Rabbi Lipsker who established a Yeshiva in Meknes with 65 students, all of whom eat in their canteen and 30 of whom are interns (sleeping and eating here)... They have another so called Yeshiva in Midelt with 130 students...

He told me of his discussions with Mr. Shalom [head of “Ozar HaTorah”] and his intention to send here 3 rabbis; but Mr. Shalom declining to

pay the salaries of these rabbis, they themselves decided to develop Chinuch in Morocco, this upon the wish of the late Rabbi Schneerson. Therefore he brought with him 2 more people, 1 Rabbi Matusof, and told us they had the intention to develop their activities in the small towns and will endeavour to teach and develop Melamdin and Shochtim...

He came to me to discuss this matter and referring to the continuous close cooperation with JDC asked that we should appropriate a certain sum toward their past and current expenditures...

It is undeniable that there is here in Morocco a great need for teachers and with due respect to the high integrity of the Lubawitzers, I am reluctant to undertake anything which later may turn out to be a boomerang.

Three days later, on March 15th, 1951, Mr. Judah Shapiro (JDC – Paris) responds to Mr. William Bein, describing the modus operandi of Chabad: Build First – Ask Later, and explaining his view on Chabad:

Your letter presenting your discussions with Rabbi Gorodetzki and his request from AJDC for his program of religious education, is extremely interesting.

I had known some time ago that Rabbi Gorodetzki has begun to do some work in Meknes. I realized then that his technique was to begin an activity and at a later date make a request to AJDC for support. I therefore told him that time, that as far as we in AJDC were concerned, we regarded our responsibility as fully discharged in the field of religious education in Morocco

by our support of the Ozar Hatorah program. I pointed out to him that we recognized the limitations of the Ozar Hatorah program and it might very well be that members of his group could act as teachers within the Ozar Hatorah system, but that in such case he would have to work out his relationship with Ozar Hatorah. I told him that we would not consider an additional subvention for religious education to any other group but the Ozar Hatorah...

Your letter shows that Rabbi Gorodetzki proceeded, nevertheless, to develop a program completely outside the scope of that of Ozar Hatorah and is now presenting us with a request, despite our advance warning to him...

Having said all of the above, it is also necessary to point out that Rabbi Gorodetzki's service is better than that which has been done by Ozar Hatorah until now. My position, therefore, is not in opposition to Rabbi Gorodetzki's work, and I would myself regard an arrangement by AJDC with him, as far better than that with Ozar Hatorah...

On March 16th, 1951, Mr. William Bein (JDC – Morocco) wrote an additional letter to Mr. Judah Shapiro (JDC – Paris), describing an additional meeting with Rabbi Gorodetsky on the matter, and describing the "problem" that Chabad has too much influence on the JDC...

I explained Rabbi Gorodetzki that despite our high esteem for their devotion and integrity, it is an important policy problem whether or not, at this stage of the game, JDC should embark on subsidizing any new activities outside the sphere of the existing local

organizations...

I further told him that there exists obviously much space for improvement in the field of Chinuch in Morocco and that at least a number of schools, Yeshiboth and particularly internats [boarding schools] could be established if the means for these would be available.

You, of course, understand best how difficult my situation is. It is an open secret that the Lubawitcher claim that they have certain "Hashpoa" upon JDC religious problems...

We here feel that they will develop a net of institutions in various communities which receive no aid in this respect from Ozar Hatorah or us, and [if] are willing and willing cooperate with them later on – they will submit the bill to JDC or, if [not] – they will not participate in the UJA, [and] will start a campaign based upon the existing institutions which JDC helped or did not help to establish in Morocco...

A few days later, on March 21, 1951, Mr. William Bein (JDC – Morocco) wrote an additional letter to Mr. Judah Shapiro (JDC – Paris), describing an additional meeting with Rabbi Gorodetsky on the matter, and his respect for Chabad activities:

Today I had again a conversation with Rabbi Gorodetzki. He came to talk to me about "Tachles"...

After a long conversation (you are of course informed that I know the Lubawitcher since 20 years or so, and in Russia as well as in Poland I was in close contact with them)

he asked the following: That JDC should participate in their expenses in Morocco...

I told Rabbi Gorodetzki that JDC and myself have real esteem for their ability and integrity, but in my opinion their function should be to take active part in the teaching, but under no circumstances, should they create institutions and particularly internats [boarding schools] which are costly... I further told him that the best service they could render here is to see to it to reach an agreement with Ozar Hatorah and that their teachers should play an important role in the educational program of the new Talmud Torah...

I am hasting to send you this letter as Rabbi Gorodetzki will visit you in a day or so.

At this point the JDC was not ready to support the Chabad schools in Morocco, but Chabad nevertheless continued expanding, fundraising on their own, and hoping for a resolution.

Next week we will present some more discussions of the JDC offices, and show how Chabad managed to secure funding from the JDC.



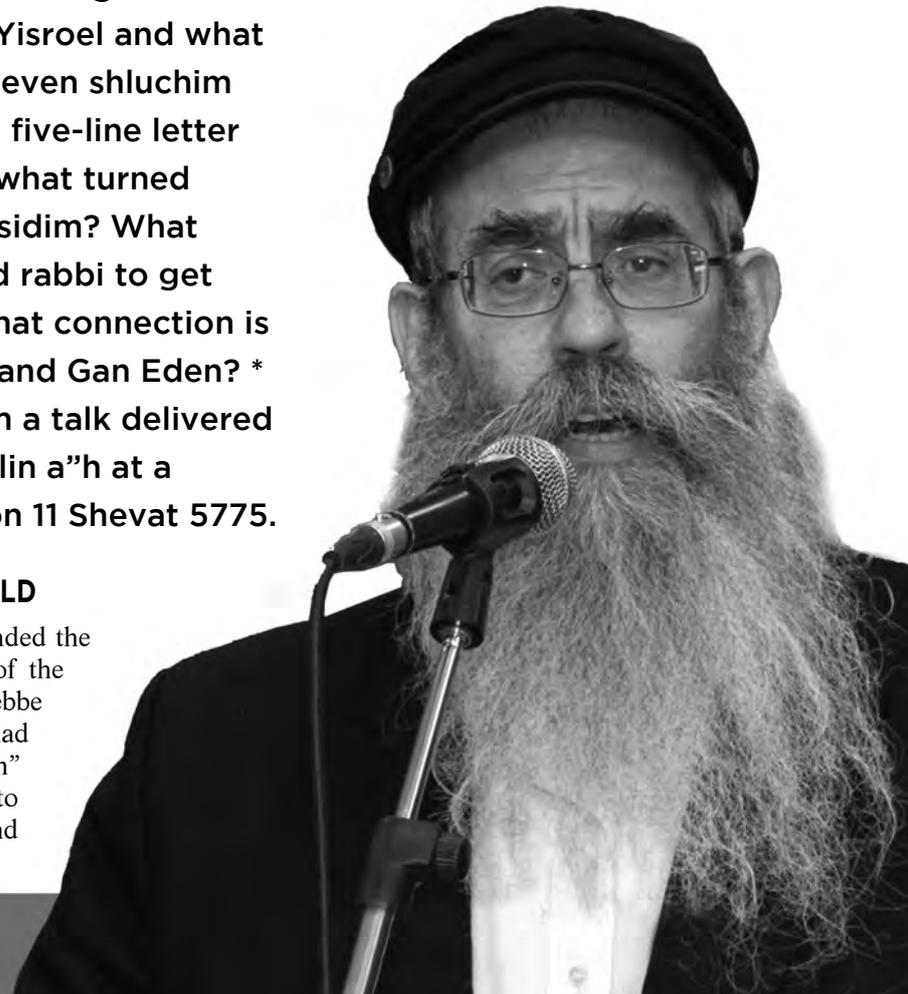
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FULFILL THE REBBE'S SOUL REQUEST AND GO ON MIVTZAIM!

How did the Rebbe announce at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen forty years ago about a special shlichus to Eretz Yisroel and what was the significance of eleven shluchim to each place? How did a five-line letter overturn Melbourne and what turned the mekuravim into Chassidim? What one word inspired the old rabbi to get involved in mivtzaim? What connection is there between mivtzaim and Gan Eden? * Fascinating snippets from a talk delivered by R' Aharon Eliezer Ceitlin a"h at a Chassidische farbrengen on 11 Shevat 5775.

THIS IS HOW YOU BUILD

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5736, I attended the Rebbe's farbrengen. At the end of the farbrengen, late at night, the Rebbe closed his eyes and said the time had come to send "a holy congregation" to Yerushalayim the holy city and to Tzfas the holy city, ten to Tzfas and



ten to Yerushalayim, in order to build the land, physically and spiritually. The Rebbe said that whoever was willing to do this shlichus should register his name with the secretariat. Nobody knew how long this shlichus opportunity would last so many signed up.

Starting from Yud-Tes Kislev, at every farbrengen, the Rebbe brought this shlichus up. At one of the farbrengens the Rebbe limited those eligible for the shlichus based on certain criteria. At another farbrengen, the Rebbe said that since we need to ascend in holiness, we would add one, both to Yerushalayim and to Tzfas, so there would be eleven shluchim to each city. The Rebbe even stated which day the shluchim would leave, the 11th of the month of Shvat, and they would arrive in Eretz Yisroel on the 12th of Shvat.

That is how the Rebbe decided to send eleven emissaries on the eleventh of the month of Shvat, including myself, and he gave each of us volume 11 of Likkutei Sichos.

Until then, we did not know the significance of the number eleven. In later years, the Rebbe already explained that the seventh generation is particularly connected with the number eleven. The previous generation is ten, 100%, as each of the ten s'firos are comprised of all ten when they are fully integrated, but eleven is above 100%. Now it

is the generation of Moshiach and now we need to bring Moshiach.

Moshiach is above 100% and in order to bring M o s h i a c h

we need to be above 1 0 0 % .

Our generation is eleven.

It should be noted that in 5736 the Rebbe sent 11 shluchim to Tzfas and 11 shluchim to Yerushalayim. In 5737 the Rebbe sent six families to Tzfas and in 5738 he sent another eight families to Tzfas and eight bachurim to Yerushalayim.

On a number of occasions the Rebbe laid out the goal of the group of shluchim he sent to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe said to build the land, physically and spiritually. How do you build the land physically and spiritually? The Rebbe explained, materially – by buying things, buying homes, renting homes, physically building up the land. By the way, the Rebbe also sent along with the rosh yeshiva, R' Mentlick, who joined us on the trip, 10,000 liras for him to give to Prime Minister Rabin as his symbolic participation in building the land. We went to Rabin together with R' Mentlick and brought him the 10,000 liras.

Building the land spiritually is done through the mitzvaim.

DON'T FORGET THE SIMPLE JEW

Already in 5733, I had the privilege of going on shlichus to Australia with another six bachurim. A year later, in 5734, the Rebbe came out strongly with mitzvaim. Mivtza T'fillin had started a few years before, but in 5734 we began working hard on the five mitzvaim (Torah – that every Jew should learn Torah every day, T'fillin, Mezuzah, Tz'daka – that every home should have a pushka, and Bayis Malei S'farim – a house full of Jewish books).

I will never forget the day that we received a letter from the Rebbe with five lines, no more: **A**

soul request, to intensify all five campaigns.

How inspired we were! It is hard to convey it today. We simply turned the city over!

Boruch Hashem, nowadays there are many Chassidim who do mitzvaim. There are many Chabad Houses and many shluchim who build nice buildings. But R' Chadakov would tell the shluchim: Don't forget the shlichus you had in the first days and months when you arrived, when you did not yet have very big buildings and classrooms. What did you do all day? You visited a Jew, you went on mitzvaim, you put t'fillin on with them, you learned with them, you said "good morning" to them every day – that is the main shlichus. Do not forget the individual. The houses and buildings are just to serve the shlichus; the main thing is the Jews themselves.

As shluchim to Australia, we learned in the yeshiva which had bachurim from Chassidische homes. They were the majority of the yeshiva and there were also talmidim who were first learning about Judaism. When the Rebbe said we should go on mitzvaim, we did not think initially of including those talmidim when we went on house calls, for they themselves needed kiruv.

The ones who went on mitzvaim were the talmidim-shluchim along with the talmidim from Chassidische families. However, since the Rebbe had sent a "soul request," we decided to include the other bachurim too. We went in pairs, with a bachur who knew more, along with a bachur who was just beginning to learn. I remember that evening, after the yeshiva s'darim, when all the pairs went out to make house calls with so

“R’ Chadakov would tell the shlichim: Don’t forget the shlichus you did in the first days and months when you arrived, when you did not yet have big buildings. What did you do all day? You visited a Jew, you went on mitvzaim, you put t’fillin on with them, you learned with them, you said “good morning” to them every day – that is the main shlichus. Do not forget the individual.

much enthusiasm.

As much as we worked with those bachurim up until that point, learning and farbrenging with them to instill them with Chassidische chayus, a chayus of hiskashrus, nothing was as effective as that night when they went on mitvzaim. When they spoke with others about strengthening their relationship with G-d, it affected a transformation in them. They returned to yeshiva on such a high that it is indescribable. From then on, we took them every time we went on mitvzaim.

Why do I tell you this? Stories are a nice thing but I want to suggest: Boruch Hashem, there are so many doing mitvzaim, making house calls, etc. There are sometimes fellows that you are in the middle of being mekarev and teaching. Take them with you. It will have a tremendous effect on them.

GO ON MITVZAIM!

At the same time that the

Rebbe sent us a letter with a “soul request,” there was an old rabbi in Melbourne who had learned in Lubavitch. His name was R’ Mordechai Perlov. I don’t remember how old he was, maybe eighty, even ninety. He was a great scholar, a big Chassid, and would daven every day, word by word, at length. He had not been to the Rebbe for a long time and then he had a family simcha which was an opportunity to go to the Rebbe. He wrote to the Rebbe asking whether he could go.

I remember sitting in the office of the shliach R’ Yitzchok Groner a”h and speaking about several things. In the middle of the conversation he received a phone call from his brother Leibel who conveyed the Rebbe’s response to R’ Perlov’s question about a trip. I was sitting opposite R’ Groner and watched how he would write the answer.

I don’t remember the answer verbatim but the gist of the answer was that there are differences in climate and weather from place to place (and other similar expressions that I never heard before), so it was not worth making the trip and the fact that his intentions were proper was sufficient.

When R’ Groner reached the last line of the Rebbe’s answer, he wrote in big letters, “Mivtzaim?” Meaning, what’s happening with you, i.e. with R’ Perlov, regarding mitvzaim?

An old chassid who learned in Lubavitch asks the Rebbe about a trip and the Rebbe responds with an inquiry relating to mitvzaim...

As a result, R’ Perlov approached R’ Yitzchok Groner and asked him what he needed to do with mitvzaim. R’ Groner told him: You are a distinguished person. Call all the rabbanim

and tell them what the Rebbe said about mitvzaim so they will repeat it to their communities.

R’ Perlov did so.

Every Chassid needs to take part in mitvzaim and fortunate is the person who does so. The Rebbe taught us not to suffice with that but to drag others along, to speak to our friends about it. It’s not just a favor for the people you meet whom you are enabling to do a mitzva, but a big favor for the people themselves who go. It brings blessings for them and for their wives and children.

WHOSE GAN EDEN?

The following story I heard from R’ Shabtai Slavatitzky who learned in Kfar Chabad.

Every Friday afternoon he would go to the central bus station to do mitvza t’fillin with R’ Eliyahu Aryeh Friedman who later lived in Tzfas. They had a regular spot where they set up their small folding table and put t’fillin on with passersby. One time they noticed a strange thing. Not far from them stood a Litvishe looking bachur who had also set up a table and t’fillin and was putting them on with passersby. (Today it is no longer an unusual sight because many organizations started doing this and the Rebbe surely wants this.)

At a certain point, the Litvishe bachur stopped someone and asked whether he wanted to put on t’fillin. The man said no and continued walking. The T’nimim debated whether to ask him even though he had just refused the other bachur. They finally decided to try anyway. They went over to him, put a hand on his shoulder, and offered t’fillin and this time he agreed.

The Litvishe bachur watched

Continued on page 38

THE EXPLOSION

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg



COULDN'T SEE THE EARTH

The eighth plague, the locusts, was arguably the most devastating plague of all, after the plague of the firstborn. When an agrarian society has its crops consumed by locusts, it faces mass starvation with deadly results. No other plague had the potential to wipe out as many people as this one.

When Moshe warned Pharaoh of this impending plague he described it thus:

“For if you refuse to let them go, then tomorrow I am going to bring a swarm of locusts into your border. It will obscure the view of the earth and no one will be able to see the earth.” This translation follows the commentaries of Rashi and Ibn Ezra, who explain that the words “no one will be able to see the earth” refers to the people.

However, the classic commentator, *Kli Yakar*, reads a deeper meaning into this text, actually translating it more literally. When one reads this verse in the original Hebrew, its literal rendition yields a very different result: The locusts themselves will not be able to see the earth they are consuming!

This translation, when taken at face value, appears to be bizarre. One can easily convey the devastating nature of the

plague by stating that no person would be able to see the earth because it would be covered with locusts. This clearly describes the magnitude of the plague. However, what value is there in the knowledge that the locusts couldn't see the earth? How does that add to our understanding of the plague?

Kli Yakar's answer is that when people cannot see the food they are consuming their hunger will not be satisfied. This premise is based on the Biblical description of the Manna as food of affliction. No matter how nourishing the Divine food was, the people who consumed it remained hungry. The Talmud explains that when we cannot see what we are eating, we do not feel satiated. This is also one of the reasons we light the candles for Shabbos. One of the commandments associated with Shabbos is to enjoy it by eating special Shabbos food. We cannot fully appreciate and enjoy the food in the dark.

Based on this premise, the *Kli Yakar* concludes that the locust's inability to see the earth they were consuming actually magnified the effects of the plague. Due to their blindness they would devour the vegetation of Egypt ravenously. They would leave nothing, since no matter how much they ate they would not be sated. Because

they would not be satisfied with what they ate outdoors, they would even enter the houses to find food there.

That is all well and good, but we must still probe for the deeper significance of the locusts not being able to see the earth and how it can apply to our understanding of the process of the Exodus.

TEN PLAGUES: TEN LESSONS

The Ten Plagues were not just punishment for Pharaoh and the Egyptian people for their cruel enslavement of the children of Israel. The Ten Plagues were also intended to shatter the wall that separated the reality of G-d's existence and the distorted view of reality held by Egyptian culture. The Ten Plagues were intended to impress upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians of G-d's abiding love for the Jewish people, whom He characterized as “My firstborn son.”

In truth, the Ten Plagues were also intended for the Jewish people, to prepare them for their Exodus and for the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

Moreover, these Ten Plagues have something to teach us as well. When we probe beneath their surface we will discover a

“The answer lies in the paradoxical nature of *g’vura*. On the one hand, it limits the flow of *chesed*. On the other hand, *g’vura* actually means strength. A *g’vura* personality uses extraordinary powers to restrict and discipline himself precisely because he is strong. When, however, there is a need to unleash unbridled fountains of Divine energy, the Yitzchak/*g’vura* personality generates and releases far more potent forces of kindness than his *chesed* counterpart.

message that will prepare us for our liberation from this Exile. It will do so by removing the obstructions that exist between G-d’s reality and our exile-tainted and distorted perception of reality.

In light of the above, we must try to understand what we can learn from the plague of locusts, particularly from the fact that the locusts themselves were blinded and could not see the earth they were eating from.

LOCUSTS: EXTRAORDINARY BLESSINGS?

The word for locust in Hebrew is *arbeh*. This word can also be found in the Torah in several of G-d’s blessings as in, “I will multiply your seed.” The very word that represents one of nature’s greatest curses, threatening the very lifeblood of a country, is also the word that speaks of extraordinary proliferation of life.

Moreover, the word *arbeh* has the same numerical value as *Yitzchak*, the second Patriarch.

What is the connection between Yitzchak and proliferation? Isn’t Yitzchak associated with the trait of *G’vura*, which means judgment,

constriction and restriction? One would imagine *g’vura* is the very opposite of proliferation and growth.

The Rebbe (*Toras Menachem* 5742) sheds light on this matter by referring to a Talmudic statement (*Shabbos* 89b) that in the Messianic Era, we will refer to Yitzchak, exclusively, as our father.

At first glance, this seems rather strange inasmuch as we always refer to all three Patriarchs as our fathers.

Furthermore, the Talmud describes Yitzchak as the one who will defend the Jewish nation while Abraham and Jacob will not! This too is rather counterintuitive in light of the fact that Abraham personifies the attribute of kindness and Jacob embodies the trait of compassion. Yet, it is Yitzchak who represents the attribute of *g’vura*-judgment who will mount the most strident defense of even the most recalcitrant Jews!

The answer lies in the paradoxical nature of *g’vura*. On the one hand, it limits the flow of *chesed*-kindness. On the other hand, *g’vura* actually means strength. A *g’vura* personality, in fact, uses extraordinary powers to restrict and discipline himself precisely because he is strong.

When, however, there is a need to unleash unbridled fountains of Divine energy, the Yitzchak/*g’vura* personality generates and releases far more potent forces of kindness than his *chesed* counterpart.

A simple analogy illustrates this point. *G’vura* relative to the flow of *chesed* is what a dam is relative to the flow of a river. Initially, it blocks the full force of the river and allows only as much water as is desired to trickle through the obstruction. However, when enough water accumulates it pushes the dam aside and an extraordinary torrent of water is unleashed that carries an exponentially greater volume along with the dam itself. Such is the power of *g’vura*.

BREAKING THROUGH ALL OF THE OBSTRUCTIONS

In the Messianic Age, the Rebbe explains, we will not just be the beneficiaries of the conventional kindness and compassion that are associated with Abraham and Jacob. Rather the full force of Divine beneficence will break through all the obstructions that are the product of our shortcomings and the stifling and inhibiting influence of Galus.

Thus, in the Messianic Age, it will be Yitzchak’s power, specifically, that will remove all the obstacles and allow the proliferation of positive energy to cover the earth with a spiritual sea.

THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS REVISITED

We can now return to the plague of locust-*arbeh*. While this plague attacked the agricultural infrastructure of Egypt in the most physical sense, it also

unleashed the potential for the positive power of *arbeh* to enter the world.

We can now reinterpret the verse which describes the way the locusts covered the earth. One can draw a parallel between this covering of the earth and the one described in Isaiah, "And the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea."

But, how do we apply the part of the locusts themselves not being able to see the earth which, as the *Kli Yakar* explained, provoked their ravenous appetite.

As was mentioned above, when the obstructive nature of the dam-g'vura causes the water to accumulate, not only does it ultimately break through the obstruction with incredible force, it takes the dam with it.

Similarly, when the dynamic of Geula-Redemption is ready to unfold, as it is today, not only does it unleash extraordinary force, it also takes the dam with it. The obstruction itself first causes the intense power to

develop and then it becomes a part of the unprecedented flow.

When this occurs, even the heretofore negative features of Galus can no longer "see the earth." All humanity then develops a ravenous thirst and hunger for G-dliness. We consume every bit of G-dly awareness that can be accessed outside in the "field." This means that we see G-dliness in every blade of grass and everything that exists regardless of its corporeal nature.

THE AGE OF ARBEH

However, the *arbeh's* appetite is not satisfied. We then look for more overt G-dly expression in the "**houses** of the Egyptians." This is an allusion to the Bais HaMikdash, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which will be built with the efforts that we made here in the Diaspora to create miniature Sanctuaries in our synagogues, Houses of Torah Study and our own homes. These Sanctuaries, the Talmud relates, will be reestablished in

Jerusalem and attached to the Bais HaMikdash! There will be an explosion of G-dly knowledge and awareness that will mirror the physical delights that will proliferate in the Messianic Age.

How does one prepare for this age of unprecedented goodness?

When we whet our appetite to learn more of Torah and never quench our thirst or satisfy our hunger, we prepare for the age of unlimited knowledge. This is especially true when we study the spiritual dimension of Torah, which focuses on revealing the Divine in the physical world and to see things from a Divine perspective which doesn't see the Earth as an existence independent of G-d.

Our generation has been inundated by an unprecedented explosion of Torah knowledge. We have already been given a taste of what is to come. Let us plunge into this sea of knowledge and with that experience prepare ourselves for the ultimate and imminent Age of Arbeh.

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greeted at the gate by IDF soldiers, was surreal. Yet, this is the picture of our world today. We've already gotten used to the honored role of security guard at the entrance to every shopping center, and this vision appears completely acceptable to us. Will our children grow up seeing soldiers at the entrance to their schools holding loaded firearms as a regular daily occurrence?

4.

In addition, there is also revenge of a security nature, which is no less important. Just

two weeks ago, the Israel Defense Forces eliminated a leading arch-terrorist in Lebanon, who had been incarcerated in an Israeli prison and later released. This is perhaps the message that needs to prevail from this dreadful wave of terror. A murderer of Jews can have only one judgment: elimination. Just like that cursed terrorist in Lebanon, only without a delay of thirty years – the sentence to be carried immediately after the crime. If the residents of Tel Aviv wouldn't have been so confused and would have acted immediately, they wouldn't have wasted millions of shekels and whole days of

nerve-racking fear and tension searching for the terrorist, who managed to give the slip to Israeli Police for days. However, when soldiers acted with their clear survival instincts and liquidated the terrorists after previous attacks, they were called in for a series of terrifying interrogations. Why should it come as any surprise that everyone ran away this time?

The Rebbe once asked a leading official on Israeli national security during yechidus: "Why do you capture [the terrorists]? Kill them!"

TRUE JEWISH REVENGE

The problem is not with trying to solve the problem of the random torching of an Arab home in Kfar Duma. We all support these efforts. The issue here is disproportion. What is the basis for the General Security Services' assumption that bringing the killers to justice will halt the Arabs' rampage of murder and bloodshed? The notion that the terrorist attacks of the last two months are a result of burning an Arab house in Duma is the root of all failures in the war on terror.

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

1.

A terrorist attack in Yerushalayim. The Prime Minister: We will discuss steps to deal with terror.

A murder in Gush Etzion. The Prime Minister: We will capture the murderers; we will deal with terrorism.

Another murder in Yerushalayim. The Prime Minister: Blah, blah, blah...

A murder in Tel Aviv. The Prime Minister gets in his car, drives to the site of the attack, stands there with a solemn facial expression, lights a candle, promises to do everything to eradicate terror, and calls for an

immediate Cabinet meeting.

To a certain extent, this illustrates the dire security situation over the past two months. One terrorist attack follows another and who really cares about this? A Jew is murdered here, another Jew stabbed there. Blah, blah, blah – and off to work we go. We have far more important things to deal with. Who has time for such trifles when we have to stop the inciter who sang the frightening words, “Remember me and strengthen me now”? Of course, what’s the question? Let’s put things a little more in proportion. It’s more important for the General Security Services to deal

with real security threats, such as wiping out all “songs of revenge” at weddings of hilltop youth. That’s what’s been occupying the state-run media.

The fact that we’re against violence in all forms is quite clear. We don’t need anyone to teach us about loving our fellow man. However, the blatant disproportion cries out. At first, we were all shocked by the arsonist attack on a home in Kfar Duma. We were all ready to do whatever was necessary to prevent such an incident from ever happening again. However, when the General Security Services and the Minister of Defense came along, they made the young suspects into enemies of the people and the biggest danger to the security of the Middle East. Forget about ISIS. We’ve discovered the real thing: the hilltop youth. This turned everything upside down. For anyone who tries to silence an entire sector of the population because its political agenda is deemed inappropriate due to an isolated act of senseless violence caused by some confused youngsters should not expect to find us supporting him.

This is the same GSS (Shabak) that opposed the Gaza expulsion for security reasons, yet in practice, it fell in line behind the political agenda, bending every rule and law in the book to prevent the appalling tragedy of mass demonstrations against the Gush Katif expulsion. Only ten years have passed since the GSS worked tirelessly against the ticking time bomb of the orange-clad teens, who threatened to gather in synagogues in Neve Dekalim during the final days before the scheduled eviction and sing *T’filla L’Ani*. Hundreds of Shabak agents spent those days trying to stop people from

trickling into Gush Katif, fearful of the young orange forces. These are the very same people who for the past ten years haven't been able to stop the flow of young Sudanese and Eritreans into the autonomous regions of Tel Aviv. After all, there's human life and there's human life. And since this is not a real threat, we don't have to apply all available means to prevent it. It's also possible to settle for a toy fence that can enable hundreds of thousands of foreign intruders from Eritrea and Sudan to transform us into "a country for all its refugees."

2.

The problem is not with trying to solve the problem of the random torching of an Arab home in Kfar Duma. We all support these efforts. The issue here is disproportion. What is the basis for the General Security Services' assumption that bringing the killers to justice will halt the Arabs' rampage of murder and bloodshed? The notion that the terrorist attacks of the last two months are a result of burning an Arab house in Duma is the root of all failures in the war on terror.

Since our loss of purpose stemming from the Oslo Accords, every time a wave of terrorist attacks commences, the GSS and Israeli policymakers look for a reason why the Arabs decided to kill Jews. What happens that a person suddenly wakes up one morning and commits an act of wanton murder in the streets of Tel Aviv? And what happened at the Chevron massacre during the 5689/Tarpat pogroms? Perhaps the head of the Shabak and the IDF chief of staff need to learn a little history. They should hear about Chevron's dedicated pharmacist, who

tended to all the city's residents, Jews and *l'havdil* Arabs alike, with everlasting devotion. Then, one day, his neighbors came into the pharmacy and slaughtered him and his family. They should learn about the massacre in the Old City of Yerushalayim and the frightful events in the Holy City of Tzfas before the birth of the State of Israel. So please, stop looking for logical reasons - it is an established fact that "Eisav hates Yaakov." They originally told us that there was terrorism because there was no "diplomatic process," afterward the excuse was because the diplomatic process was off track, and then they decided that Jews going up to Har HaBayis was the reason for terrorism. Now, we hear that it's due to the burning of a house in Duma. So how do we protect Jewish lives and stop the wave of terror? Simple, we arrest the person who sang "Remember me and strengthen me now" at that wedding...

This is more than just unequal treatment. This isn't merely persecution and changing all the rules to fight a few crazies spray-painting "price-tag" graffiti. It's all based on the assumption that we're always to blame. If they murder Jews, we first have to understand what we did wrong. Why do we have to apologize this time? We're really sorry.

3.

In the meantime, another Jew is murdered in Tel Aviv - and we're allowed to say "may G-d avenge his blood." Yes, we want revenge. Not revenge in the form of bloodshed and murder of innocent people *ch"v*, rather revenge with light - Jewish revenge. In the past, Jewish settlements were erected for every Jew murdered. Today, when they

request government approval for new yishuvim in Yehuda and Shomron, it is labeled a demand of "political blackmail" on the part of the settlers. Many people ask: What is the connection between the murder of Jews and Jewish construction? However, the answer is quite simple: Because they kill us in order that we won't be here. Faced with these efforts to undermine our presence in Eretz Yisroel, we need to strengthen Jewish settlement of the homeland given to us by the promise of Alm-ghty G-d.

They have to understand that their tactics will produce the exact opposite results. You murdered twenty-six Jews in the last two months, we'll build twenty-six new settlements in the next two months. The problem is that the government of Israel considers building twenty-six new settlements as a completely unrealistic idea, a fantasy, as opposed to the murder of twenty-six Jews - something totally routine. If someone at a Cabinet meeting would attempt to raise the issue of building twenty-six settlements, they would look at him with eyes wide open and say, "Have you lost your mind? Building twenty-six settlements is totally disproportional." On the other hand, twenty-six Jews murdered in two months (!!) is quietly accepted as the norm, as we mindlessly continue with our drab wretched lives...

It is simply inconceivable that the only response to the rampaging terror is another one hundred and fifty bus stops in Yerushalayim, solid barriers, and soldiers at the entrance of schools to protect the children. The picture of children arriving last week at schools in Tel Aviv,

Continued on page 47

A JEWISH ANSWER

By D Chaim

When I returned home on Friday afternoon after school, my mother asked me to get her some vegetables. I left the house and skipped down the long flight of stairs as I headed for the nearby vegetable store. With the Druze worker, Ali, standing nearby, I filled up bags with all kinds of vegetables and then went over to the register near the door. I asked Kobi, the cashier, to add it up.

Kobi seemed preoccupied and when he heard my request he let out a sigh, gave himself a shake, and began quickly weighing my heavy bags.

"Did something happen?" I asked him.

"No," he said curtly. I did not feel comfortable asking him anything else and left the store hoping all was well with him.

When I returned home with the bags I did not have much time to hang around and my mother's thank you pursued me as I dashed down the stairs again and headed for Shimon the barber.

"Just don't forget to go into Nachum's bakery" she said loudly in the direction of the empty hall.

Shimon the barber wears a small kippa but is not yet

religious. I've been getting haircuts from him since I'm three and there is always a long line of people waiting for a haircut. But this time the barbershop was empty. I went over to where you get the haircut and Shimon, who knows me well, smiled.

After I sat down, Shimon lifted the handle and raised the chair.

"Please remove your glasses," he asked politely as he took off my yarmulke and set it aside. I heard the familiar buzzing of the haircutting machine and then, as my hair began falling around me, I heard Shimon sigh heavily. "What happened?" I asked in concern, but Shimon continued the haircut without answering me.

When I left Shimon's shop I remembered my mother's request and continued on to Nachum's bakery. Shopping there is my regular Friday afternoon activity. As I stood on line with a bag of cookies for Shabbos, I saw someone familiar. "Oh, that's Dovid, the guard at my school," I thought.

Dovid is not fully observant yet and I was happy to see him buying things for Shabbos. I guess working in a religious

environment affected him. I wanted to call his name and say hello but then I heard, for the third time that day, yes, Dovid sighed. A Jewish sigh, the kind that arouses the heart.

That was a red light for me. There were too many sighs for one day and who knew what terrible thing happened. I decided to hurry home and ask my mother whether something happened.

After five minutes of running, with the bags flapping in my hands, I reached our building and walked into our house, though not before knocking gently on the door.

I put the cookies on the counter and then went over to my mother and asked, "Ima, did you hear what happened?"

"What?" she asked, momentarily frightened

I said, "I don't know. That's why I was asking. Did something happen?"

My mother said, "I didn't hear about anything."

"How strange," I said to myself. "It could not be a coincidence." I continued

thinking over what happened that day. "When I go to shul for Kabbalas Shabbos I will tell Shmuli and together we will

figure this out," I decided.

"I bet something terrible happened and the adults prefer not to tell us. Do you think that makes sense?" I asked Shmuli in shul after telling him what happened that day.

"No, I don't think so," he said. "If that was true, I think your mother would have said that something happened but it's not a reason for you to worry. If she said that she didn't hear about anything, then I'm sure that is true."

"You know what? Maybe we should ask Berel the shamash. He knows everything and if something happened, he is sure to know."

Berel has the longest white beard of anyone I know and he can (almost) sweep the floor of the shul with it. He usually is serious and does not have patience for children, especially not for their questions. I am afraid of him so I asked Shmuli to approach him.

Shmuli agreed and I stood nervously behind him as he asked the shamash, "Did you hear about anything negative that happened this morning or recently?"

Berel answered impatiently, "If something happened, then I would certainly have heard about it."

I realized that if I did not give details, we were unlikely to

solve the mystery and so I got up my courage and overcame my shyness and said, "But this morning I was in the vegetable store, the barbershop, and the bakery and in all three places I heard people sighing. Something must have happened!" I concluded my speech as Shmuli turned to look at me in admiration.



איור: לאה

"What don't you understand?" replied Berel. "The Rebbe says that today there is not a single Jew who has not had a thought of repentance at least a few times. I suppose the neshama of those sighers of yours

were inspired at that moment and the thought of t'shuva resulted in a sigh.

"He's right," said Shmuli after we hurried away from Berel's scowling face. "I remember that there is a HaYom Yom for 3 Tammuz which says that the sigh of a Jew is also a great t'shuva."

"Then the Geula can happen already!" I said.

"What's the connection?" asked Shmuli.

"Very simple. A few days ago I was in shul during the daily shiur and I heard someone say that it says in the Gemara that the coming of the Geula depends on the Jewish people doing t'shuva."

"So since every Jew already had a thought of t'shuva, the Geula can happen," finished Shmuli while nodding enthusiastically.

"Do you understand what Kobi and Shimon and Dovid told you?" Shmuli suddenly asked.

"What do you mean, they did not say anything, they just sighed?" Now it was my turn not to understand.

"Nu, what's with you? Think a little," sighed Shmuli.

And you, dear reader, do you understand what they were telling him?